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OTHER HANDS

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DRAGONS OF THE NORTH

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EDITORIAL: GETTING THERE

Good news: since last issue came out, the new *Other Hands* website (whose permanent URL is listed in "Fine Print" on the back cover) has received nearly 2,000 hits! It is an investment that has paid off, as our subscription base has risen to 70 (the highest it has ever been) and continues to grow. At this rate, we may just hit the 100 mark by Christmas...

ICE has re-scheduled its 2nd ed *Lord of the Rings Adventure Game* to coincide with the release of the new LotR films (which will be released in 2000-2001. Not much new info on the adventure kits (though work continues on *The Dwarven Company*). *Middle-earth: The Balrog* is finally at press and will hopefully be in the stores by early November, and the intention to publish a combined player guide for *Against the Shadow*, The *White Hand* and *The Balrog* has been confirmed.

Progress report on *Other Hands* Supplements: ETA for *The Oathbreakers* has been pushed back to Spring of '99 due to several non-gaming obligations I must attend to; however, the artwork for it proceeds apace. (So far about 20 out of the 60 primary illustrations have been completed.) Completion of the map for *The Inland Sea* realm module is anticipated by Christmas (though the module itself will not be released until after *The Oathbreakers*). Thus far about 60 people have expressed interest in purchasing copies of these supplements, so, depending on our finances at the tune, we may do a print run of 100. The cost will not be known until a final page count has been set. One more tid-bit of news: Jeff Erwin has recently confirmed his active intention to produce a *Lindon* realm manuscript for the series (perhaps combined in a two-volume format with Oliver Schick's *Mithlond* manuscript).

Back to reality. We begin the offerings for this issue with two short game mechanics articles. In the first, Carl Brodt continues his development of Dwarven professions and spell lists for MERP and RM. The second piece comes from OH newcomer James Garriss (who runs a very popular play by e-mail campaign set in the Fourth Age). James has reworked the character development system in MERP to move role players away from the straitjacket of D&D style character classes.

Next comes the background essay for this issue. This piece stems from some research I did over the summer for *The Dwarven Company*. Whether or not this "draconian prosopography" proves to be of worth, I'm sure everyone will benefit from a clearer picture of the region itself— hence the centerfold map. A word on the relation between this essay, Dwarven Company, and previous MERP modules: In the course of developing its adventure kit, ICE has decided to alter certain chronological details and geographical relationships laid out in *The Grey Mountains* and *Creatures of Middle-earth*. Since my goal here has been to synthesize and make sense out of the existing MERP canon as regards the Grey Mountains, I've chosen not to incorporate these alterations into the essay—apart from the name changes, which do not, in and of themselves, tamper with the history/geography of the region.

This month's adventure comes from Eric Dubourg (our foothold in France). Set in TA 1409, this scenario enables PCs to take part in the heroic rescue of the *palantír* of Weathertop from the Witch-king's clutches, and puts them in a position to influence the destiny of the royal houses of Cardolan and Arthedain.

And then we rejoin Rastarin and friends in Umbar, only to watch them turn against one another as each strives to pursue their quest for Morthec, King of the Dead.

One more note: You have probably noticed that this issue is 4 pages longer than usual. This measure was necessitated by the inclusion of the map. Future issues will resume the 24-page size in order to stick to our tight budget. I will be footing the bill for any extra expenses incurred by upping the page count this time round — consider it an early Christmas present...

Chris Seeman
1 October, 1998

The Dwarven Engineer

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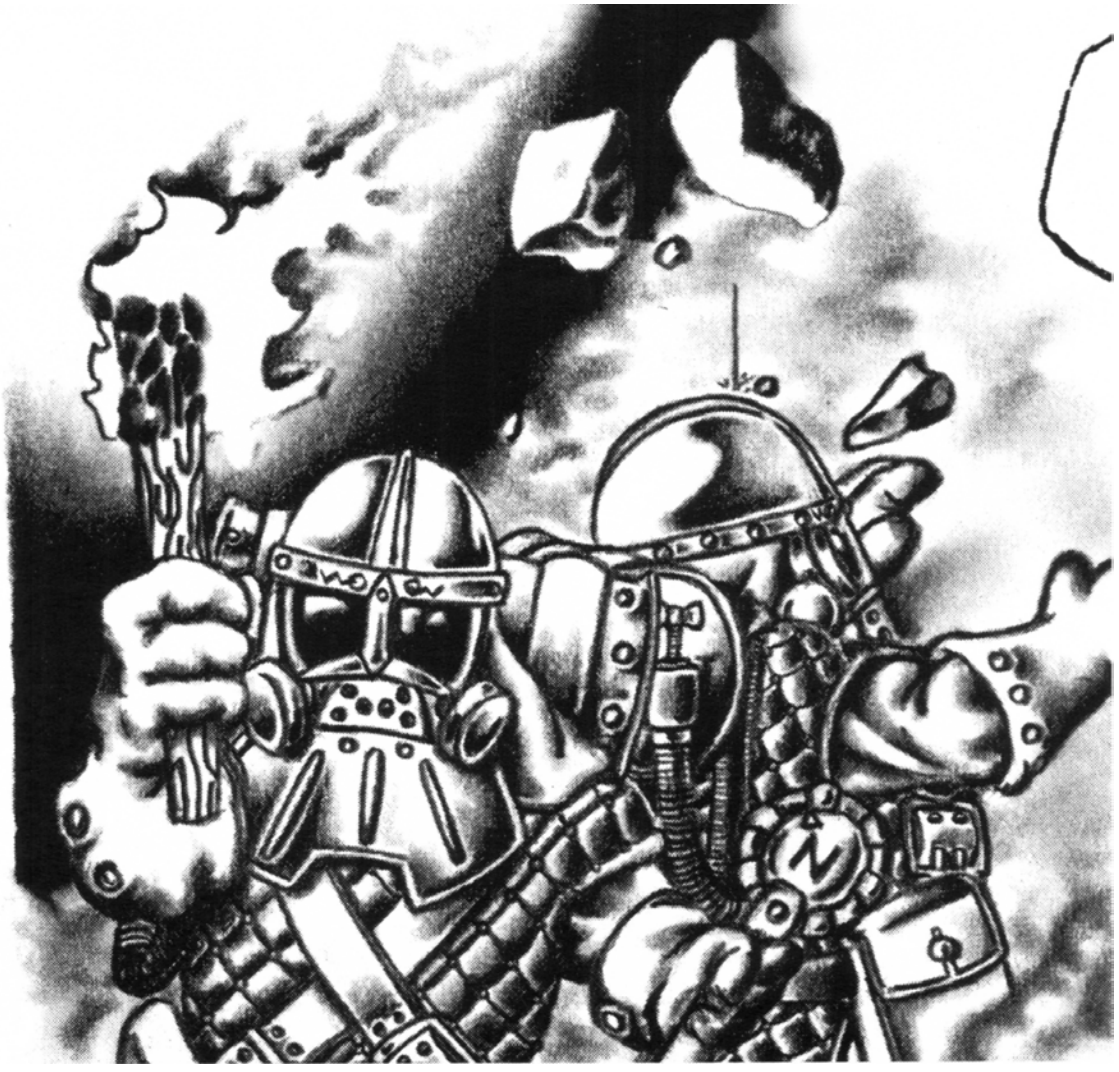
Although the MERP rules indicate that Dwarven culture produces engineers rather than bards, they never specify the capabilities or characteristics of the Dwarven engineering "profession." This essay fills that 14-year hole in the rules.

The engineering profession has supported the progressive material development of Dwarven society since sometime in the First Age. In that capacity, Dwarven engineers engage in a huge variety of scientific endeavors and perform a large number of functions not directly relevant to adventure gaming, the most important of these functions being the construction of large buildings and public works.

Although the natural tendency of Dwarves is to keep specialized knowledge a secret, as early as the middle of the First Age, Dwarven engineers were pressed by construction needs to trade knowledge with others of their craft who had greater specialization in a particular type of construction. This trading bred loose associations of Dwarven engineers who developed reciprocal work arrangements with each other, and these loose associations, in turn, eventually formalized into a guild-like organization called "The Brotherhood of Stone" or, more simply, "The Brotherhood." (As will become obvious, the Brotherhood shares a number of characteristics with the Masons of the Middle Ages.)

Before long, the Brotherhood adopted a number of policies and procedures to facilitate the work and development of the engineering profession. For example, the Brotherhood initiated an "open door" policy for its members. Upon reaching a Dwarven city requiring his skill (normally in construction), a Dwarven engineer identified himself, through a secret password or handshake, as a member of the Brotherhood at the dwelling of one or more local engineers, who ritualistically welcome him in a short but formal ceremony. After such a ceremony, the engineer shares residence for the duration of the project without payment in coin, goods or services. Of course, if the hosts sense that the visitor is taking advantage of their hospitality by prolonging the project, they might brutally end this welcome with a beating and loss of some or all of the engineer's property.

To perpetuate their profession, the Brotherhood developed in almost every Dwarven city apprenticeship programs for young Dwarves hoping to expand their knowledge of science, in particular civil engineering



and the building crafts. These apprenticeships, which almost invariably require the younger male Dwarves to dwell with older male Dwarves and which emphasize the un-Dwarven value of sharing, have attracted much unkind and often groundless speculation from other Dwarves about sexual "sharing" within the Brotherhood.

The Brotherhood also instituted a stringent and elaborate quality assurance program to hold members accountable for shoddy workmanship. Each large stone used in a construction project was initialed by its carver and its inspector, and fines were levied by local Brotherhood leaders if an unacceptable amount poor workmanship was detected.

Should a stone pass initial inspection but subsequently fail, the local leaders convene a formal, private inquiry. If they attribute the failure to inadequate carving and inspection, the leaders levy a fine and/or incite the beating of carver and inspector alike. Similar penalties are exacted on any culprit who might have ruined the stone during construction.

After completing the investigation and dishing out any punishments, members of the Brotherhood hold a public burial ceremony for the stone, a ceremony which includes the same songs for the dead which Dwarves would normally hold for a deceased relative. One cannot help but wonder whether at some point Elven witnesses to such ceremonies took them as evidence, as reported in *The Silmarillion,* "that dying the Dwarves returned to the earth and the stone of which they were made..." (p. 42)

Dwarves can often spot engineers of their race by subtle differences in their dress and appearance. Engineers normally tend to wear brighter clothes of finer make when not in the midst of a dirty task. Their beards tend to be unruly by Dwarven standards, since, when they are away from their dwelling, they wear masks specifically designed to screen out stone dust. This choice to appear different in dress and grooming, of course, does not help to minimize the aforementioned speculations that something is socially amiss in the Brotherhood.

GM **Note:** *The identification of such differences are of "Light" difficulty for Dwarves but are "Extremely Hard" for races unfamiliar with Dwarven engineers and "Hard" for non-Dwarves who are familiar with the profession.*

Although almost all Dwarven engineers are members of the Brotherhood, those who end up adventuring are substantially more balanced in their capabilities than a their counterparts. Adventure-oriented capabilities, which normally require intense concentration, are best expressed in game terms as Channeling spell lists, even though they are, in reality, non-magical skills made possible by scientific knowledge, training in the application of that knowledge, and equipment facilitating it which each engineer carries around in a bag or backpack. GM Note: The GM must determine the weight of the bag or backpack, plus the potions, gadgets, and other items inside. The spell lists available to Dwarven engineers who adventurer compare with those of the MERP Bard in the following manner. New or revised lists are elaborated below.

MERP Bard	**Dwarven Engineer**
Essence Hand	Medical Law (new)
Spell Ways	Prosthetics - Lay Healer (Spell Law)
Spirit Mastery	Liquid / Gas Skills - Alchemist (Spell Law)
Essence Ways	Damage Resistance - OM (Spell Law)
Essence Perceptions	Structure Wardings - Alchemist (RM V)
Illusion	Phantom Movements - Nightblade (RMC)
Physical Enhancements	Physical Enhancements - OE (MERP)
Unbarring Ways	Escaping Ways - Sleuth (RM III)
Lore	Analysis (new)
Controlling Songs	Weapon of Power (new)
Sound Control	Arrow of Might (revised)
Item Lore	Item Lore (Bard - MERP)

MEDICAL LAW

1 – Research (I) (Duration: 24 hrs; Range: S) Allows caster to research a particular disease/health condition.

2 – Detections (P) (Duration: 1 min/lvl; Range: various) Gives caster the ability to diagnose a disease within 10' R and locate its source within 100' R.

3 – Sterilization (P) (Duration: P; Range: T) Stops the spread of a known disease/poison, and has a 75% chance of stopping the spread of a related disease/poison.

4 – Resistance (U) (Duration: 1 yr; Range: T) Target gains +100 to RR vs a disease, but a 25% chance exists of the side-effects of a -20 to MM and OB for 3-7 days.

5 – Neutralize Disease/Poison (P) (Duration: P; Range: T) Cures the spread of a known disease/poison, and has a 25% chance of curing a related disease/poison.

6 – Vessel Repair (U) (Duration: P; Range: T) Repairs all damage to any 1 artery/vein (bleeding from a single wound up to 5 hits/rd).

7 – Energy Transfer (U) (Duration: P; Range: T) Transfers 1 BD point/rd from 1 humanoid to another, up to target's maximum. An

unwilling participant must be restrained in a manner which prevents active resistance of the energy transfer. There is a 35% chance of sending the target into shock for 5-7 days. Unless the transfer was fatal to the donor, the donor's decreased BD points return through a normal healing process, which can be sped up by magic.

8 – Neutralize Pain (P) (Duration: 8 hrs; Range: T) Target may sustain an additional 50% of total concussion hits before becoming incapacitated. The spell has the side-effect of reducing OB, DB and MM by 50 for a like period.

9 – Organ Repair (U) (Duration: P; Range: T) Repairs damage to 1 organ (other than the brain) not completely destroyed, with a full recovery time of 4-12 weeks.

10 – Stimulate heart (U) (Duration: P; Range: T) Target's heart restarts after a heart attack/seizure.

ANALYSIS

This spell list is a combination of the Sage's "Analysis" list in RM II and the Sleuth's "Analysis" list in RM III.

1 – Food and Drink Analysis (I) (Duration: NA; Range: 6") Allows caster to learn the origins, purity and general worth of 1 portion of food/drink. Though any impurity will be discovered, only its type (bacterial, poison, dirt, excrement, chemical, etc.) will be indicated.

2 – Earth Analysis (I) (Duration: NA; Range: 10') Gives caster knowledge of the nature/origin of natural earth, as well as when/how worked earth was obtained/worked.

3 – Stone Analysis (I) (Duration: NA; Range: 10') Gives caster knowledge of the nature/origin of natural stone, as well as when/how worked stone -was obtained/worked.

4 – Metal Analysis (I) (Duration: NA; Range: 10') Gives caster knowledge of the nature/origin of natural metal, as well as when/how worked metal was obtained/worked.

5 – Gas Analysis (I) (Duration: NA; Range: 10') Gives caster knowledge of the nature/origin of natural gas, as well as when/how worked gas was obtained/worked.

6 – Liquid Analysis (I) (Duration: NA; Range: 10") Gives caster knowledge of the nature/origin of natural liquid, as well as when/how worked liquid was obtained/worked.

7 – Drug/Poison Analysis (I) (Duration: NA; Range: 1') As #1 above, except 1 drug/poison (if any) in the portion is analyzed. Caster also learns the antidote (if any), as well as the potency lvl of the drug/poison.

8 – Power Analysis (I) (Duration: NA; Range: 10') Allows caster to determine whether 1 item/person/place has power, whicl realm the power is from, and a basic idea of the power's origin/name.

9 – Light Analysis (I) (Duration: NA; Range: 10') Gives caster knowledge of the nature/origin of natural light, as well as when/how worked light was obtained/worked.

10 — Delving (I) (Duration: NA; Range: T) Gives caster knowledge of significant details about an item's construction/purpose (not specific powers).

WEAPON OF POWER

At any point in time, a weapon can have only 1 spell of any given type embedded in it. (Spells are of the same "type" if they are differentiated only by a "I" or a "II" or a "III" in their name.) A second spell of the same type always displaces the first one. For example, if the caster first places *Electrical Attack I* on a weapon and then casts *Electrical Attack II* on the same weapon while the weaker spell is still in effect, the stronger spell merely displaces (rather than supplements) the weaker.

1 – Rejoining I (F) (Duration: var; Range: T) Caster may repair any damage to any melee weapon, rejoining a broken portior of up to 1 linear"/lvl. However, if the repaired weapon is magical, it will break again upon delivering a C or better critical on a regular melee critical chart, or any critical involving a roll of 51+ on the Physical Criticals for Large Creatures Table.

2 – Electrical Attack I (F*) (Duration: 1 rd/lvl; Range: T) Caster may embed an electrical attack in a weapon. The critical delivered is 4 lvls less than the normal melee critical delivered by the weapon (E melee = A electricity; D melee = T electricity; C/B/A melee = no electricity).

3 – Brightfighting (F) (Duration: 10 rds/lvl; Range: T) Causes a weapon to glow with light. At the time of casting, caster determines the intensity of this illumination (from the brightness of a torch to the dimness of a candle).

4 – Enchantment (F) (Duration: P; Range: T) Grants caster's weapon +l/lvl of spell bonus at time of casting to any attacks made. If caster gains in level and wishes the bonus to be increased as well, the spell must be recast. The bonus is effective only in the hands of the weapon's owner.

5 – Deadly Blow (F) (Duration: 10 rdst; Range: T) Allows caster to adjust the "physical critical" of a melee weapon by -1 or + 1. This ability does not apply to a weapons magical/quasi-magical abilities (such as delivering an electricity critical), nor does it work if the required touch occurs when caster is being struck by the weapon.

6 – Personal Tie (F) (Duration: P; Range: T) Ties a weapon to caster. Anyone else wields it at -1 (elusive balance)/lvl of weapon's owner.

7 – Electrical Attack II (F*) (Duration: 1 rd/lvl; Range: T) Caster may embed an electrical attack in a weapon. The critical delivered is 3 lvls less than the normal melee critical delivered by the weapon (E melee = B electricity critical; D melee critical = A electricity; C melee = T electricity; B/A melee = no electricity).

8 – Rejoining II (F) (Duration: P; Range: T) Caster may repair any damage to a magical weapon, rejoining a broken portion of up to 1 linear"/lvl. However, a mithril weapon repaired with this spell will break again upon delivering a C or better critical, or any critical involving a roll of 61+ on the Physical Criticals for Large Creatures Table.

9 – Throw (F*) (Duration: 1 rd/lvl; Range: T) Caster may throw a weapon for the duration with a range of feet = to St bonus (30' maximum). The weapon attacks on its normal table with all relevant ranges being regarded as per the Missile Weapons Attack Table.

10 – Electrical Attack (F*) (Duration: 1 rd/lvl; Range: T) Caster may embed an electrical attack in a weapon. The critical delivered is 2 lvls less than the normal melee critical delivered by the weapon (E melee = C electricity; D melee = B electricity; C melee = A electricity; B melee = T electricity; A melee = no electricity), f or 1st physical (non-spell) critical from the targeted melee weapon, whichever is less.

ARROW OF MIGHT†

At any point in time, an arrow can have only 1 spell of any given type embedded in it. (Spells are of the same "type" if they are differentiated only by a "I" or a "II" or a "III" in their name.) A second spell of the same type always displaces the first one. For example, if the caster first places *Power Arrow I* on an arrow and then casts *Power Arrow II* on the same arrow while the weaker spell is still in effect, the stronger spell merely displaces (rather than supplements) the weaker.

1 – Aiming I (F) (Duration: 5 rds*; Range: T) Gives caster +5 to hit with next arrow.

2 – Ram's Head Arrow I (F) (Duration: 5 rds*; Range: T) Caster's next arrow delivers an additional 'A' Unbalancing critical if critical is indicated.

3 – Aiming II (F) (Duration: 5 rds*; Range: T) As #1 above, except bonus is +10.

4 – Flaming Arrow I (F) (Duration: 5 rds*; Range: T) Caster's next arrow gets 2 criticals (one on the Puncture Critical Table, another on the Heat Critical Table). The maximum heat critical against metal armor is "A" while the maximum against leather and no armor is "B." One roll determines both criticals. The flame from the arrow normally glows for 5 rds + 1 rd/lvl after impact and illuminates a 10' rad area.

5 – Power Arrow I (F) (Duration: 5 rds*; Range: T) Caster's next arrow inflicts xl.5 damage.

6 – Ram's Head Arrow II (F) (Duration: 5 rds*; Range: T) As #2 above, except the additional Unbalancing Critical is a "B."

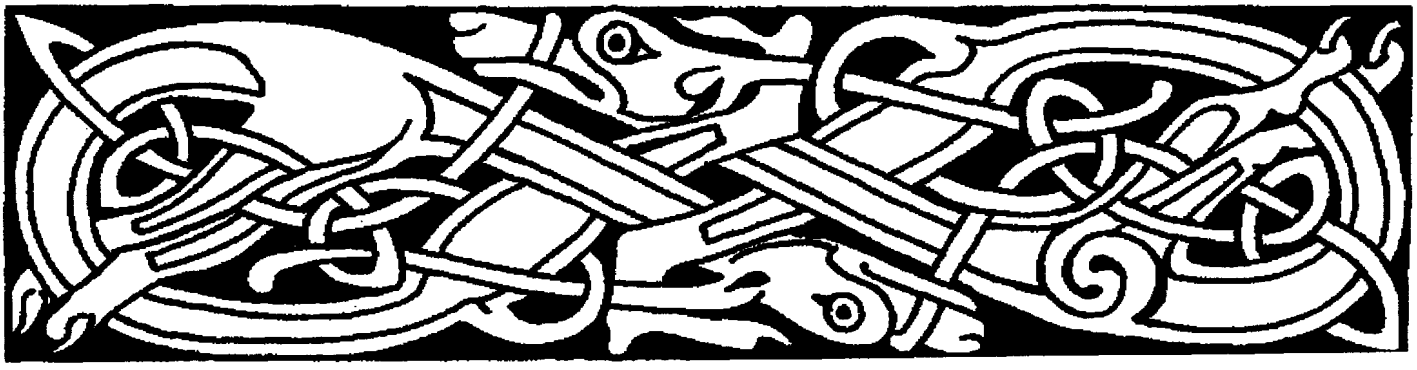
7 – Aiming III (F) (Duration: 5 rds*; Range: T) As #1 above, except bonus is +15.

8 – Flaming Arrow II (F) (Duration: 5 rds*; Range: T) As #4 above, except the maximum results on the heat critical are "B" on plate armor and "C" on all other forms of protection.

9 – Illusion Arrow I (F) (Duration: 5 rds*; Range: T) Caster's next arrow looks as if 2 arrows were shot in tandem. Target adds only * Ag bonus to DB. 25% chance of Deflections (RM - Deflections I) affecting the illusory arrow instead of the real one.

10 – Power Arrow II (F) (Duration: 5 rds*; Range: T) As #5 above, except x2 damage. *or until the arrow shot hits a solid surface, whichever is less.

† This is a minor variant of Bryan Jacquay's "Arrow of Might" from Grey Worlds 1:1 (June 1993). The spells take effect the round after the spell is cast.



A Character Development System For MERP

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This character development system is best classified as a classless character system. It intentionally avoids typical stereotypes about characters (e.g., "magic-users don't know how to fight and fighters don't have artistic or healing skills"). Tolkien's writings contain many examples of fully developed characters who have learned a complete range of skills. Within this system, any character can learn any desired skill without any penalties.

SKILL ACQUISITION

The mechanics of skill acquisition are similar to those presented in 2nd edition MERP. For each advancement in level, a character earns 25 Development Points (DPs). 1 DP increases a skill by 1 rank, 3 DPs increase a skill by 2 ranks, 7 DPs increase a skill by 3 ranks. Skills cannot be increased by more than 3 ranks/level.

SKILL BONUSES

Skill bonuses are calculated nearly the same as in 2nd edition MERP. The total Skill Bonus (which is used to determine a character's success or failure when employing a skill) = Rank Bonus + Statistic Bonus + Item Bonus + Special Bonus. There is no longer a Profession Bonus.

STATISTICS

Each skill is associated with a particular statistic. This relationship is used to define the Statistic Bonus, whose value is calculated using the Stat Bonuses Table (BT-1) in 2nd edition MERP. For this article, the traditional MERP statistics have been supplemented with two new statistics — Dexterity and Empathy. If the GM prefers to use a different set of statistics, the associated statistic can simply be replaced with its equivalent or analogue in the system being used.

Strength (St) - the advantageous use of muscles

Agility (Ag) - coordination of the entire body

Dexterity (Dex) - quickness of the hands and fingers

Constitution (Co) - general health, endurance

Intelligence (Int) - reasoning and memory

Intuition (In) - the ability to relate to nature and magic

Presence (Pr) - discipline, esteem, courage, willpower

Empathy (Em) - understanding of people and animals

ACADEMIC SKILLS

Alchemy [Int] - working with chemicals

Astronomy [In] - understanding the movements of heavenly bodies

Forensics [Em] - determining what has happened at the scene of an event (i.e., a crime) by examining available evidence

Geography [Int] - broad knowledge of terrain within and without one's homeland

History [Int] - knowledge of the past of a specific race or region. History skills must be developed separately for each race and region (i.e., Noldorin History, Númenórean History).

Lore [Int] - familiarity with a specific sphere of knowledge in Middle-earth, including (but not limited to) animals, demons, dragons, herbs, or poisons. Lore skills must be developed separately.

Research [Int] - studying existing volumes of information for the purpose of learning specific facts

ARTISAN SKILLS

Acrobatics [Ag] - gymnastic movement of the body, including tumbling

Architecture [Int] - designing the blueprints and plans for military and non-military structures from a set of requirements

Animal Handling [Em] - training, taming, and working with animals, developed separately for each type of animal (i.e., dogs, horses, hunting falcons)

Athletics [Co] - participating in any number of competitive sporting skills

Construction [Co] - the making of buildings and structures from an architecture blueprint or plan

Cooking [Em]

Craftsmen [Dex] - the building of items or working of materials, including (but not limited to) fletching, leatherworking, lock-building, trap-building, and woodworking. Craftsmen skills must be developed separately.

Farming [In]

Trading [Pr] - buying products or materials and re-selling them at a higher price

Mapping [Int] - committing knowledge about a region to paper for the purpose of aiding navigation, both above and below ground

Military Engineering [Int] – the making of military fortifications from an architectural blueprint or plan

Mining [Co]

Smithing [St/Dex] - working of metals, including (but not limited to) blacksmithing, goldsmithing, and silversmithing. Smithing skills must be developed separately.

ARTISTIC

Acting [Em]

Dancing [Era]

Instrument [Em] - playing a musical instrument, developed separately for each instrument

Juggling [Dex]

Painting [Em]

Singing [Em]

Story-telling [Em]

Writing [Em]

COMBAT

1-Handed Light [Ag] - weapons that rely more on speed than strength (e.g., dagger, shortsword, scimitar)

1-Handed Edged [St]

1-Handed Conclusion [St]

2-Handed Weapons [St]

Body Development [Co] - consistent with MERP rules, each BD rank earns 1D10hits

Brawling [St] - unarmed combat, using fists or handy items not explicitly designed for combat (e.g., bottles, chairs, table legs)

Missile [Dex]

Pole-arm [St]

Thrown [Dex]

Wrestling [Co] - unarmed combat designed to subdue as opposed to simply wounding

MAGIC

Create Item [In] - creating a magical item. Must be used in conjunction with a skill of making (such as Smithing or Craftsmen) and a magic spell.

Create Rune [In] - creating a rune. Must be used in conjunction with writing a language and a magic spell.

Directed Spells [In]

Read Rune [In]

Work Theme [xxx] - as Spell List in 2nd edition MERP. Initial training must come from a school or a teacher of some sort.

Use Item [In]

MEDICAL

Animal Healing [Em]

Diagnostics [In] - interpreting a medical problem and the necessary treatment. Must be performed before Animal Healing, First Aid, or Surgery can be successfully used.

First Aid [In]

Surgery [In] - working to repair internal body parts.

MOVEMENT

No Armor [Ag]

Soft Leather [Ag]

Rigid Leather [Ag]

Chain [St]

Plate [St]

OUTDOORS

Boating [Ag] - handling small water craft (e.g., canoes, rowboats)

Caving [Co] - exploring natural caves without getting lost

Climbing [Ag]

Equestrian [Em]

Fishing [Em]

Hunting [Em]

Navigation [In] - navigating overland using stars and other natural aids

Rope-mastery [Dex]

Sailing [Ag] - handling water craft with sails

Signaling [Int]

Surveillance [Int] - maintaining a watch without being seen

Survival [Co] - living off of the land

Swimming [Co]

Tracking [Em]

Trapping [Em]

Weather-watching [In] - predicting the weather

SOCIAL

Bureaucracy [Pr]

Bribery [Pr]

Diplomacy [Pr]

Gambling [Pr]

Gaming [Int]

Languages [xxx] - as in 2nd edition MERP

Persuasion [Pr]

Public Speaking [Pr]

Seduction [Pr]

Tactics [Int] - the organizing of small military units to take the most advantage of terrain and capabilities

Ventriloquism [Em]

SUBTERFUGE

Begging [Pr]

Contortions [Ag]

Disarm Trap [Dex]

Disguise [Pr]

Forgery [Em]

Hiding [Ag]

Intrusion [Int] - breaking and entering

Interrogation [Pr]

Perception [Int]

Pick Pocket [Dex]

Pick Lock [Dex]

Slight-of-Hand [Dex] - illusions and trickery, used for pulling coins out of people's ears, etc.

Stealth [Ag]

Streetwise [Pr] - knowledge of illegal and underground activities

SPECIAL SKILLS

A GM may desire to limit certain skills to only certain characters, perhaps due to their unique backgrounds. One example might be Martial Arts, which would only be available to an Easterling or Southron. These skills can be acquired and developed just like any other.

OCCUPATIONS

Although characters are no longer assigned a class, they should have one or more occupations. Occupations are typically defined by a set of related skills. For example, a hunter might have Missile, Tracking, Stealth, Hunting, and Animal Lore. In an organized setting, such as the fellowships (guilds) of Minas Tirith, many members have the same occupation; therefore, tests are administered to determine the rank of their members. These tests are a practical means of determining the Total Bonus for a member. All related skills must exceed the rank minimum to be given the title of that rank.

RANK TOTAL BONUS

Novice 10+ Apprentice 25+ Journeyman 45+ Master 95+ Adept 115+

FROM CLASS TO OCCUPATION

Some MERP classes translate nicely to occupations. The following are suggestions for the related skill sets for occupations. The GM should feel free to modify and add new sets.

Assassin - Poison Lore, Stealth, 1-H Edged, Hiding, Streetwise, Disguise

Bard - Geography, History, Instrument, Singing, Story-telling

Burglar - Stealth, Climbing, Streetwise, Pickpocket, Pick Lock, Intrusion

Explorer - Navigation, Survival, Weather-watching

Scholar (Sage) - History, Research, 1 Lore skill, Alchemy

Scout - Surveillance, Perception, Tracking

Warrior (Fighter) - Tactics, 1 Melee Weapon skill, 1 Ranged Weapon skill

Dragons of the North

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In the world of The Hobbit *and* The Lord of the Rings, *"the far North"—the Grey Mountains and the Withered Heath—is the breeding place of dragons (Hob.25, 28; LotR III.346, 353, 368). It is the pretence of these creatures that gives this region its chief interest as a setting for role playing games. Only here (at least, as far as northwestern Middle-earth is concerned) can one taste the thrill of confronting one of these storied beasts—cunning, deadly and avaricious.*

ICE has treated the dragons of the North in three successive MERP publications. The first of these, Mirkwood *(M), was content to invent a list of names for these dragons along with some brief notes concerning the habits and characteristics of each. This coverage was substantially expanded in the now out-of-print campaign module, The Grey Mountains (GM). In addition to giving more background information on each dragon, this book includes a black-and-white map of the North, indicating by numbered references where exactly in the mountains the dragons had their lairs. (Unfortunately, these numbers do not show up very well, rendering the map difficult to use.)* Creatures of Middle-earth *(CoMe) provides still further biographical information on the dragons (some of which conflicts with what appeared in GM).*

The Middle-earth Collectible Card Game series, and especially Middle-earth: The Dragons *(ME:TD), has drawn upon this material for many sites and creatures.*[1] *Finally,* The Dwarven Company *(DC), the projected prototype for ICE's MERP Adventure Kit series, is also partly grounded in these older modules, being set in the Grey Mountains and focusing upon the Dwarves' desire for vengeance against the dragons. However, DC will be accompanied by a fair amount of revision and expansion, especially in the area of dragon and Dwarf-hold names. At the same time, since its focus will be limited to only a few dragons, DC will not repeat all of the information from the earlier sourcebooks.*

Given the inaccessibility of GM, and the uneven coverage of DC in relation to the other products, it is high time for a compilation article to synthesize and update all of the relevant information about the dragons of the North. I present in alphabetical order all of the dragons that have appeared in any of the above-mentioned sources, noting discrepancies where these turn up. Next, I indicate and explain any revisions that have taken place as a result of work on DC (mostly linguistic in nature). I then present the revised dragon names, along with other named sites, in their proper locations on the map accompanying this article.

CALLING DRAGONS NAMES

As already hinted, some of the revision work undertaken for DC was linguistically inspired. And this for two reasons — firstly, as part of ICE's overall effort to draw its publications closer to the spirit and letter of Tolkien's world; secondly (though certainly not second in importance), in an attempt to make the dragon names more aesthetically pleasing, more evocative, and generally more user-friendly. In this task we are all indebted to the scholarly dedication and linguistic expertise of David Salo (whose contributions have enhanced many of ICE's more recent Middle-earth products). All of the research undergirding this article was done by him; I take responsibility for the final selection of forms.

The names of Tolkien's dragons are not haphazard. Each reflects the language of those who gave the name. Glaurung and Ancalagon, the dragons of *The Silmarllion,* are given Elvish names because the saga in which they partake reflects an Elven perspective. Similarly, Smaug and Scatha are Germanic names (Old Norse and Old English respectively) because those were the languages which Tolkien chose to use as "translations" for the putative tongues of the peoples of northern Wilderland. The Men of Dale (and the Dwarves who adopted their speech) spoke a language which Tolkien decided to translate by Norse; hence, the dragon that destroyed their town is given a Norse name: "Smaug." So too Scatha, who "was slain by Fram (one of the "Old English"-speaking Éothéod) is an Old English name.

In a letter of 1938, Tolkien explicitly states that "Smaug" is in fact a pseudonym — not a self-given name, but rather a label of opprobrium branded upon the dragon by those whom he has wronged. It is in fact "the past tense of the primitive Germanic verb Smugan, to squeeze through a hole: a low philological jest (Let.31)." Similarly, Scatha in Old English means "scather" (i.e., "injurious person, criminal, antagonist, devil, etc.").[2]

"These don't sound so creditable," Smaug might have opined. And, in fact, they are not—the names are insults intended to revile and demean. Whether or not a dragon would actually take the trouble to name himself (or herself), and what language s/he might have used to do so, is another issue entirely. What matters is that all of the named dragons in Tolkien are, in fact, *names given by their enemies;* dragon names should be devised with this in mind.

The vast majority of the dragons of the North are antagonists to speakers of "Old Norse" (Durin's folk and the Men of Dale or Esgaroth) and for that reason the name revisions presented below are concerned primarily with Norse forms. In some cases we have taken a "conservative" approach, seeking only to render an etymology already established by the old MERP modules (usually CoMe); elsewhere we have gone a step further, creating an entirely new name that reflects some individuating quality of a given dragon. Since many of the dragons invented by ICE are supposed to have been in existence already during the First Age (often participating in the Wars of Beleriand), we have also preserved (in corrected form) their Sindarin names. This does *not* imply that anyone living in the North of Third Age Middle-earth (much less the dragons themselves) would have knowledge of these names; they are in-

tended as "historical notes," to be used only if one is actually running a First Age Beleriand campaign.

In the alphabetical listing that follows, I preface each dragon entry with page references to the ICE publications that treat that dragon.

AGBURANAR
[CoMe.97, 98; GM.30]

A cold-drake, born sometime prior to the War of Wrath (a battle which his father, Nwalkahendi, a nephew of Glaurung, did not survive). His mother, Gayiel, was slain ca. S.A. 3319 by one of the Lossoth.[3] Agburanar himself was trapped beneath a glacier during the cataclysmic globing of the earth in the wake of Númenor's fall (S.A. 3319), and remained dormant there for more than twenty-three centuries (until ca. T.A. 2200). After a brief war with the neighboring Lossoth, Agburanar migrates south to lair in the caves of Ûlund. Nicknamed (by the Lossoth?) "the Shy," Agburanar's only recorded deed was his slaying of a Dwarf-lord named Fáin and the capture of his hoard.[4] There is no tradition of Agburanar's death; he was still alive in T.A. 2589.

CoMe glosses Agburanar's name as Fo. "Shrouder of the Sun." The abbreviation "Fo." is nowhere explained in CoMe, though I have been told that it is used in the older MERP module *Rangers of the North* to designate "Forodwaith."[5] If this is correct (and the dragon's dealings with the Lossoth would seem to support this reading), then the name should properly be translated by Finnish **Aurinkoverho.** However, I am suspicious of CoMe's etymology. It seems all too gratuitous that a name meaning Shrouder of the Sun (even if purely invented) would happen to contain the patently Elvish root ANAR- "sun" (HoME V.348). Were I to rationalize the presence of ANAR-, it might be ascribed to the Snow-elves of Forodwaith. In their language, "Shrouder of the Sun" would be rendered as **Anorskal.** However, I would privilege the Lossothren element in Agburanar's biography by making the Finnish the "primary" pseudonym by which he is to be identified. Of course, the Dwarves might also have a name for him if they were aware of Fáin's fate. If the Dwarves knew of him via the Lossoth, they might simply call him by the Finnish name; or they might translate the dragon's reputed shyness into Norse; hence ***Stygg*** ("Shy"). If they did translate "Shrouder of the Sun" outright, it would be ***Sólbylaindi.***

MECCG: Agburanar TW.141; Agburanar Ahunt TD.70; Agburanar at Home TD.70; Agburanar Roused LE.75.

AMARTHOVESSË
[CoMe. 108]

A winged cold-drake, the mother of Khuzadrepa and Ieraca. Her mate, her lair, as well as her birth and death dates, are unknown.

CoMe glosses her name as Q. "Doom's Wife." The proper Sindarin form would be **Bessamarth.** The Norse (if occasion demands) would be **Ørlagakona**.

ANDO-ANCA
[CoMe.98-99; GM.23]

A cold-drake,[6] born sometime prior to the Dagor Aglareb (F.A. 60) to Glaurung. Around T.A. 1000 Ando-anca fathered a son, Klyaxar, by Arléasbíme. When Scatha, his older half-brother, was slain (T.A. 2001), Ando-anca became the most powerful dragon of the Grey Mountains. Originally lairing at Iron-pit, in T.A. 2589 he successfully assailed the Dwarven capital of Thakalgund, slaying King Dáin I along with his second son Frór, at the doors of their hall (LotR III.353), and made it his new lair. In T.A. 2644, a company of Dwarves, bent on vengeance, attempts to slay Ando-anca at Thakalgund (DC). There is no tradition of Ando-anca's death.

CoMe glosses Ando-anca as Q. "Maw of Iron." The proper Sindarin form would be ***Angarach***. Since Durin's folk would have had no knowledge of his First Age pseudonym (which Norse would render as ***Járnmuð*)**, Ando-anca will be appearing in DC under the pseudonym ***Skell,*** which is Norse for "Blow" (i.e., a blow one receives when one is hit by something). Because he assailed Thakalgund, the Dwarves remember him as "Skell the Besieger."

ANGURTH
[CoMe. 109-110; GM.24]

A winged fire-drake, probably born during the First Age. (Ancalagon was his uncle.) In T.A. 2578 he sacked and occupied Danuk-khizdín, the Dwarf-hold located beneath Long Peak. There is no tradition of Angurth's death; he was still alive in T.A. 2589.

CoMe glosses Angurth as S. "Long-death" (which is the correct Sindarin form). Translated directly into Norse, this would be ***Langðauði.*** A more individual name might be ***Einhyrnð*** "One-horned," alluding to the shameful loss of one of his two horns in a mating duel with Throkmaw. No epithet could be more infuriating to him.

ARLÉASBÍME
[CoMe. 101]

A cold-drake, born sometime during the First Age. She established her lair in a hill-cave upon the Burning Heath at the beginning of the Second Age and mated with Ando-anca around T.A. 1000 (or ca. T.A. 940; cf. endnote #11) to give birth to Klyaxar (who slew his mother shortly after birth).

CoMe glosses Arléasbíme as N. "Wicked Trumpet" (referring to her bellowing roar). The proper Norse form of her name would be ***Illúð*** or ***Illhorn.*** (The extant form appears to be Old English, composed of *árléas* "dishonest" + *byyme* "trumpet." The use of Old English is inappropriate because the language of the Éothéod—which Old English translates—did not exist when this dragon was alive, or at any rate was not used in that part of Middle-earth. *Byyme,* however, has no formal Norse cognate; lúd and horn are equivalent in meaning.)

BAIRANAX
[CoMe. 106-107; GM.24]

A winged cold-drake, born sometime during the First Age. His mother was Fûk-grima. He was nearly slain by a polar bear while making his escape from Angband in the War of Wrath, and consequently harbors an undying hatred (and appetite) for bears. As a result of his depredations, he has earned the equally intense hatred of the Beornings, who are constantly trying to avenge themselves upon him. His lair is Ovir Hollow. There is no tradition of Bairanax's death; he was still alive in T.A. 2589.

CoMe glosses Bairanax as "Bear-hunter." The element *anax,* however, is demonstrably Greek for "lord, master, owner." Since the name presumably derives from the Beornings themselves, it can hardly be imagined that they would refer to their most hated foe as their legitimate lord and master. During the earlier centuries of the Third Age, the Beornings spoke a language translated by Gothic.[7] This would render his name as ***Bernafahanð.*** (The Old English form of the later Third Age would be ***Berahunta)*** If one cares to postulate that the Norse-speakers who heard of this dragon would have translated its name, one would

get *Biarnveiðandi.*

MECCG: Bairanax TD.71; Bairanax Ahunt TD.71; Bairanax at Home TD.71; Bairanax Roused AS.

CULGOR
[CoMe.99; GM.30]

A cold-drake, born sometime during the First Age. Along with his sister Haurnfile, Culgor laired in the northernmost reaches of the Blue Mountains until the War of Wrath, during which he looted his sister's hoard and fled east to Bat Dome in the Grey Mountains. There is no tradition of Culgor's death; he was still alive in T.A. 2589.

CoMe glosses Culgor as Q. "Golden-red Horror" (referring to his coloration). The proper Sindarin form would be ***Gorgol.*** According to CoMe, the Dwarves nick-named him the "Horse-drake," because of his great speed. In Norse, this would be ***Hestðreki*** (perhaps ***Hest*** for short).

DAELOMIN
[CoMe. 107; GM.24-25]

A winged cold-drake, born sometime before F.A. 510 to Scuilaca and Dracaetren, she participated in the Fall of Gondolin and the War of Wrath. At some point she ate her mother and killed her daughter. Daelomin lairs at Dancing Spire. There is no tradition of her death; she was still alive in T.A. 2589.

CoMe glosses Daelomin as Q. "Night Shadow." This translation is erroneous. ***Daelómin*** (the "o" is long) is a North Sindarin dialectical form interpretable either as "Echoing Shadow" or "Great Echo" (the former being the more likely). CoMe states that the Elves of Beleriand also called her the "Ghost-wing," which would be rendered as ***Faeroval.*** If we posit that the Norse-speakers of the Third Age would have named her "Night-shadow," that would be ***Náttskuggi.***

MECCG: Daelomin TW.144; Daelomin Ahunt TD.72; Daelomin at Home TD.72; Daelomin Roused AS.

DRACAETREN
[CoMe. 107]

A winged cold-drake, born sometime before F.A. 510, Dracaetren was one of Daelomin's parents. Whether mother or father is not determinable on the basis of the name; hence it is unknown when or if he/she died.

CoMe does not gloss this name. Two possibilities present themselves. If the element *aetren* alludes to "eating," this might suggest that Dracaetren was Daelomin's mother (whom the latter ate). This would properly be ***Dreketin.*** However, *aetren* appears to be an Old English word meaning "poisonous," related to *átor* "poison" (which appears in "Atter-cop," Bilbo's taunt against the spiders of Mirkwood) and whose Norse cognate is *eitr.* In this case, the intended meaning would be rendered by ***Eitrðreki,*** the "Poison-drake," shortened perhaps just to ***Eitr.***

DYNCA
[CoMe 107;GM30]

A winged cold-drake, born sometime before the late First Age.[8] He lairs at Sorrowdrop. There is no tradition of his death; he was still alive in T.A. 2589.

CoMe does not gloss Dynca, and it is not interpretable as Germanic or Elvish. In the War of Wrath, an eagle tore out one of his eyes and both of his horns. In Elven histories he might have been remembered *aSErchen* ("One-eye"), the Norse form for which would be ***Eineygð.***

FÛKGRIMA
[CoMe 107]

A winged cold-drake, born sometime during the First Age. Fukgrima was the mother of Bairanax. There is no tradition of her death; Bairanax's bio in CoMe implies that she was still alive in T.A. 2589.

CoMe does not gloss her name, which appears to mean "Foul-mask, Foul-helm, Foul-specter." The Sindarin form would **be *Tholthaur,*** the Norse ***Fúlgrima.*** If it is to be assumed that the Beornings are her namers (given their hatred of her son), the Gothic would be ***Fúlhilmo*** and the Old English (like the Norse) ***Fúlgríma.***

GAYIEL
[CoMe 97]

A cold-drake, born sometime before the War of Wrath. She was the mother of Agburanar, and was slain by the Lossoth just prior to the globing of the world (S.A. 3319).

CoMe glosses her name as Q. "Daughter of Dread." The proper Sindarin form would be ***Goehel.*** The Norse (if relevant) would be ***Ógnarðóttir.***

HAURNFILE
[CoMe 100;GM30]

A cold-drake, born sometime during the First Age, prior to her brother Culgor. She laired in the northernmost reaches of the Blue Mountains until Culgor stole her hoard after the War of Wrath. Haurnfile pursued him to the Grey Mountains, but slumbered in a cave beneath their northern edge until Dwarven explorers disturbed her rest in T.A. 2007. Once awakened, she resumed her search for Culgor. Having tracked him down to Bat Dome, Haurnfile established herself in the Underdeeps beneath that mountain at a site called Slow Fall. There is no tradition of her death; she -was still alive in T.A. 2589.

CoMe glosses Haurnfile as N. "Something Fell and Flowing" (derived from "Slow Fall," the name of her lair). The name is apparently Icelandic, and its proper form, ***Hraunfors,*** actually means "Lava-fall."

HOPILOKARM
[CoMe 104]

An ice-drake, the father of Lomaw and Nimanaur. His birth and death dates are unknown.

CoMe glosses Hopilokarm as L. "Silver Worm." It is in fact Finnish (as it should be), but a severely mutilated Finnish. The proper form would be ***Hopealobikäärme.***

HYARLEUCA
[CoMe 100;GM25]

A cold-drake, born ca. T.A. 2000 (according to GM.15, as early as 1995) to Scatha and Iaurmilmë (making him the youngest of all the dragons of the Grey Mountains). His lair is Narrow Watch. There is no tradition of his death; he was still alive in T.A. 2589.

CoMe glosses Hyarleuca as Q. "Southworm" (a curious name, and not particularly evocative). Since he was born in Wilderland and was known only by its inhabitants, he would have no Sindarin name. A literal rendering of the extant name would give Norse ***Suðrorm*** and Old English ***Súthwyrm.*** Since he received at birth a 6' scar across his nose as the result of a quarrel between his parents, a more insulting epithet might be Norse ***Risþa*** ("Scratch").

IAURMILMË

[CoMe 100] A cold-drake, mate of Sca-

tha and mother of Hyarleuca. Her date of birth is unknown; Scatha slew her soon after Hyarleuca's birth ca. T.A. 2000.

CoMe does not gloss Iaurmilmë. (It is a mixed Sindarin/Quenya form meaning "Old Greed.") The proper Sindarin would be ***Iorvael;*** the Norse would be ***Gamalgrædgi***.

IERACA
[CoMe 107]

A winged cold-drake, son to Amarthovessë and brother to Khuzadrepa. Birth and death-dates unknown, but he was already "long-dead" by the time of the implied (mid to late-Third Age) setting of CoMe. CoMe glosses Ieraca as N. "Angry Messenger." The Norse form would be ***Reiðerendreki*** (shortened perhaps to ***Reki***).

ITANGAST
[CoMe 111; GM 25; RR 27]

A winged fire-drake, birth and death dates unknown; he was still alive in T.A. 2589. GM and CoMe place his lair at Gold Hill (on the Withered Heath), but *Riders of Rohan* (RR) locates it "in the south-western Grey Mountains." The discrepancy may be resolved chronologically, as the RR reference is tied to the year T.A. 1990. (Perhaps he was driven out of that lair and forced to withdraw to Gold Hill.)

CoMe and GM both gloss Itangast as N. "Guest-eater." CoMe says he got this name "after inviting a group of Northman chiefs to a rich banquet" at which they became the main course. Assuming this event is to be related to the RR material, the name would have to have been Old English ***Gieſtetenð***. The Norse cognate would be ***Geſtæta***.

MECCG: Itangast TD.63; Itangast Ahunt TD.79; Itangast at Home TD.79; Itangast Roused AS.

KHUZADREPA
[CoMe 108; GM 25-26]

A winged cold-drake, son of Amarthovessë and brother of Ieraca. His birth and death dates are unknown; he was still alive in T.A. 2590. In T.A. 2563 Khuzadrepa assaulted and occupied the Dwarf-hold of Zeleg-ubraz at Thundercleft.[9]

Both GM and CoMe gloss Khuzadrepa as Kh. "Dwarf-slayer"? The Norse equivalent would be ***Dwergavegandi*** (perhaps shortened to just ***Vegandi***).[10]

KLYAXAR
[CoMe 101; GM30]

A cold-drake, born ca. T.A. 1000 to Ando-anca and Arléasbíme,[11] making him the second youngest among the dragons of the Grey Mountains (the youngest being Hyarleuca). His lair is a hill-cave on the Burning Heath. There is no tradition of his death; he was still alive in T.A. 2589.

CoMe glosses Klyaxar as N. "Ashen Claw" (even though his depredations seem to be focused most on the Lossoth). The Norse form would be ***Oſkukló***.

LEUCARUTH
[CoMe 112; GM26]

A fire-drake, born sometime before the Nirnaeth Arnoediad (F.A. 473), in which her mother and sister were slain by the Dwarves of Belegost. At some point during the Third Age, she was stirred to wakefulness by Dwarves of Durin's folk, who slew her newborn daughter. At another unknown point in time during the "early" Third Age, Leucaruth mated with Throkmaw and gave birth to Turukulon (whom she soon drove out of the Grey Mountains). Her lair is at Irerock. Leucaruth was slain in her unsuccessful attempt to assail the Dwarven capital of Thakalgund in T.A. 2580 by King Náin.

CoMe glosses Leucaruth as "Worm of Ire." The proper Sindarin form would be ***Ráthlyg***. The Norse equivalent (minus the "worm" element) would be ***Bræði***.

MECCG: Leucaruth TW.149; Leucaruth Ahunt TD.80; Leucaruth at Home TD.80 Leucaruth Roused AS.

LOMAW
[CoMe 104-105; GM 26-27]

An ice-drake, son of Hopilokarm and older brother of Nimanaur. His lair is Collarmount. His birth and death dates are unknown. He was still alive in T.A. 2589.

CoMe glosses Lomaw as N. "Snow Jaws." The Norse would be ***Snæſkolt.***[12]

MORCARAXË
[CoMe 100]

A cold-drake (?), born sometime during the First Age. He mated with Haurnfile "in her youth" but was slain by her shortly thereafter.

CoMe does not explicitly gloss Morcaraxë, but the form is clearly Q. "Black-jaws." The Sindarin form would be ***Morgarach.***

NIMANAUR
[CoMe 105, GM30]

An ice-drake, son of Hopilokarm and younger brother of Lomaw. His lair is Scree Watch. His birth and death dates are unknown, but he was still alive in T.A. 2589.

CoMe glosses Nimanaur as S. "White Fire." The correct form would be ***Nimnor***, but the context does not require an Elvish name. The Norse would be ***Hwíteld.***

NWALKAHENDI
[CoMe 97]

A fire-drake (?), nephew of Glaurung, mate of Gayiel and father of Agburanar, born sometime prior to the War of Wrath (in which he perished).

CoMe glosses Nwalkahendi as Q. "Cruel Eye." The Sindarin form would be ***Balchen.***

RUINGURTH
[CoMe 112-113; GM 30]

A winged fire-drake, born sometime before the War of Wrath, Ruingurth is the eldest son of Ancalagon to survive the First Age. In T.A. 2590 Ruingurth occupied the abandoned Dwarf-hold of Zahar-zigil at Goat Mountain.[13] There is no tradition of his death; he was still alive in T.A. 2644.

CoMe glosses Ruingurth as "Fire Death." This is, in fact, a correct Sindarin form (though "Fiery Death" or "Red Flaming Death" might be more elegant glosses). A direct Norse translation would be ***Eldſdauði;*** however, since it is not clear that any Dwarves were aware of his prior existence, they might more likely call him ***Halt*** ("Limping") after his "strange, awkward cadence" derived from a severe shoulder wound received from an eagle in the War of Wrath.

SCATHA
[CoMe 103-104; GM 27]

A cold-drake, born sometime before F.A. 499 (and more likely before F.A. 495) to Glaurung, Scatha is the eldest son of the "Father of Dragons" to survive the First Age. He was also the first of the dragons to re-awaken in the Third Age (either ca. 1600 or ca. 1620 or ca. 1625).[14] In T.A. 1635, Scatha sacked Makalkukhizdín (Silverplunge) at Echo Mountain (Gond Maeglam) and made it his lair.[15] From 1650

onwards he raided Northman settlements. In 1995 he turned his avarice towards the recently-arrived Éothéod of the upper Anduin vales. About this same time, he fathered a son, Hyarleuca (who began to accompany him in his depredations), with Iaurmilmë (whom he slew shortly after Hyarleuca's birth). Ca. T.A. 2001, Fram the Northman slays Scatha and lays claim to the dragon's Dwarvish hoard. Two years later, King Thráin I of Erebor learns of this and in T.A. 2005 sends to Fram, demanding the return of his people's treasure. Fram refuses and is murdered. Scatha's corpse remains rotting at Makalkukhizdín.

As noted at the beginning of this article, Scatha is an Old English name, reflecting the language of the Éothéod. However, since ICE has made this dragon active already in the 1600s, it must be presumed that he originally had a different pseudonym (as the language of the Éothéod did not exist at this earlier period). There is a Norse word, ***Skaði*** ("Destruction") which is cognate in form but not in meaning with Scatha. This was probably the name by which this worm was originally known in Wilderland prior to and outside of his depredations of Éothéod (T.A. 1995-2001).

MECCG: Scatha TD.66; Scatha Ahunt TD.84; Scatha at Home TD.84; Scatha Roused LE.78.

SCUILACA
[CoMe 107]

A parent of Daelomin (hence a winged cold-drake?). Must have been born prior to F.A. 510; death date unknown.

CoMe does not gloss this name. The closest intelligible Norse form is ***Skyyǿlag*** ("Blow from the Clouds"), of which the Sindarin form is ***Fondram.***

SMAUG
[CoMe GM 28]

A winged fire-drake, born sometime during the First Age to Ancalagon. In T.A. 2570[16] Smaug flew to the Grey Mountains and occupied Anvilmount, where he remained until T.A. 2770 (when he changed his residence to the Lonely Mountain). Smaug is the older brother of Throkmaw.

MECCG: Smaug TW.155; Smaug Ahunt TD.86; Smaug at Home TD.87; Smaug Roused LE.78.

THROKMAW
[CoMe 114; GM 28]

A winged fire-drake, born sometime during the First Age to Ancalagon. Also younger brother to Smaug, one-time mate of Leucaruth and father of Turukulon. His lair is Shab Arch. There is no tradition of his death; he was still alive in T.A. 2589.

CoMe glosses Throkmaw as N. "Death Jaws." In Norse this would be ***Dauðaǿkolt.***

URUIAL
[CoMe 114;GM29]

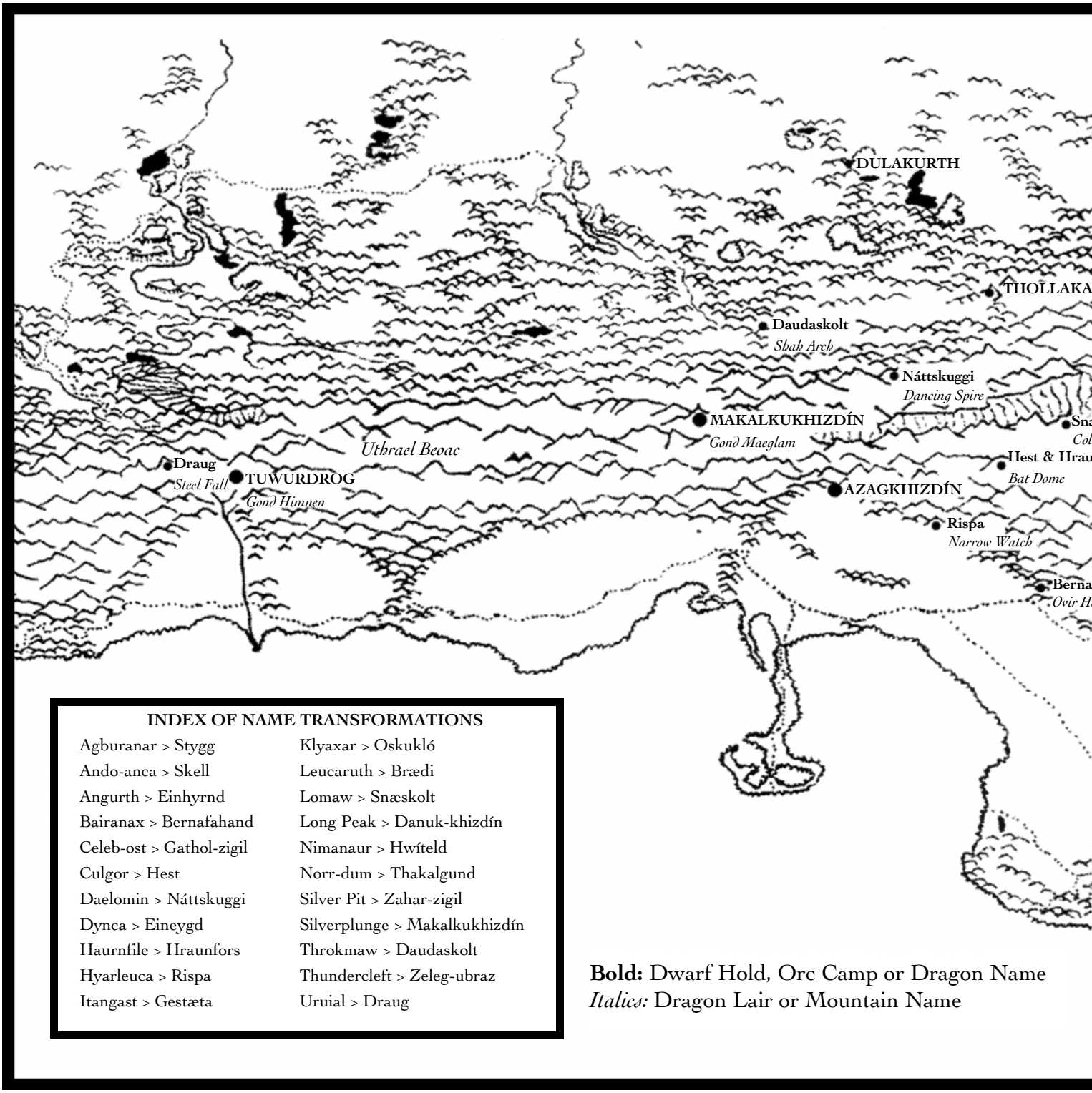
A winged fire-drake, born sometime before the War of Wrath, Uruial wandered the Northern Waste for the entire duration of the Second Age. In time, Uruial came to the Grey Mountains and made his lair at Steel Fall. Uruial is known to the Dwarves. According to *Frúin's Tale,* the dragon actually died ca. T.A. 400 but remained to guard his hoard as a ghost.

CoMe glosses Uruial as Q. "Sudden Fire." The proper Sindarin form would be ***Bregnor.*** Since Dwarven lore refers to him as the "Death-drake," the form ***Draug*** ("Ghost") would be an appropriate Norse rendition.

ENDNOTES

1. A forthcoming expansion deck, *Middle-tarth: The Dwarf-lords,* may include cards that name the seven Dwarf-holds of the Grey Mountains.
2. Personal communication from Arden Smith.
3. CoMe calls Gayiel's slayer "the third High-chief of the Lossoth." In *The Northern Waste* (NW) module (published two years later), it is denied that the Lossoth recognize any central authority, even in name. In light of this, Gayiel's slayer would probably have been a *tietäjä* (NW.54).
4. GM calls Fáin "a renegade of Barin's folk" (i. e., from the Far East of Middle-earth); yet given Agburanar's predilection for staying close to his lair, it must be supposed that Fáin dwelt among Durin's folk in the Grey Mountains. (CoMe gives no indication of Fáins tribe, though whether this was in order to reject the identification of Barin's folk, or simply a neutral omission, is unclear.) A further discrepancy exists: GM says Agburanar had to contend for Fáin's hoard with a band of Ice-orcs, whereas CoMe says it was a band of Snow-trolls. This seems to be an intentional revision.
5. I am indebted to Johan Savhn for this observation.
6. His identification as a cold-drake is noteworthy (since his father, Glaurung, was not in fact a cold-drake but a fire-drake, first and greatest of the Urulóki). This would seem to imply that a fire-drake might *become* a cold-drake under certain circumstances (cf. CoMe 97 for an explanation of this).
7. Tolkien's chronological scheme for the evolution of Northman tongues is unclear. Some passages suggest that "Old English" was already spoken in the Anduin vales long before the Éothéod came there, while others seem to imply it was, in fact, a late development. This article, following more recent MERP modules, adopts the latter premise, using Gothic as the pre-Éothéod language of the vales.
8. GM says only that Dynca participated in the War of Wrath, whereas CoMe includes "the wars of the late First Age."
9. According to CoMe, Khuzadrepa "destroyed over a dozen Dwarven settlements during the four decades" after his seizure of Zeleg-ubraz. However, GM maintains there were only seven Dwarf-holds in the Grey Mountains total.
10. It is unlikely that the Dwarves would have given Khuzadrepa a "secret, inner name," since he was not a Dwarf. However, if they did speak his pseudonym in their language of lore, it might look more like ***Khazað-ðarfûn.*** The form is invented, but is modeled after other known Khuzdul names created by Tolkien, (i.e., "Dwarf-delving" = *Khazað-ðûm,* so "Dwarf-slayer" would contain the *Khazað-* prefix.)
11. GM sets his birth 700 years prior to ca. T.A. 1640 (i.e., ca. 940).
12. I am suspicious about the etymology proposed for the extant form. To interpret Lomaw as "Snow Jaws" sounds to me like the glosser had Sindarin *loth* "snow" in mind. Not that a Sindarin form would be appropriate, since neither Lomaw nor his father seems to have been connected to Beleriand in any way; but if one did want a proper Sindarin form, it would be ***Loǿgarach.***
13. CoMe altered this tradition to have the Dwarves of Zahar-zigil awaken the slumbering Ruingurth themselves.
14. GM and CoMe are at variance as to the approximate date.
15. CoMe rejects this dating of Silverplunge's fall, making it contemporary to Scatha's conflict with Fram (T.A. 2000). The motivation for this conscious alteration in the chronology is unclear.
16. CoMe alters this date to T.A. 1600.

The Grey Mountains a

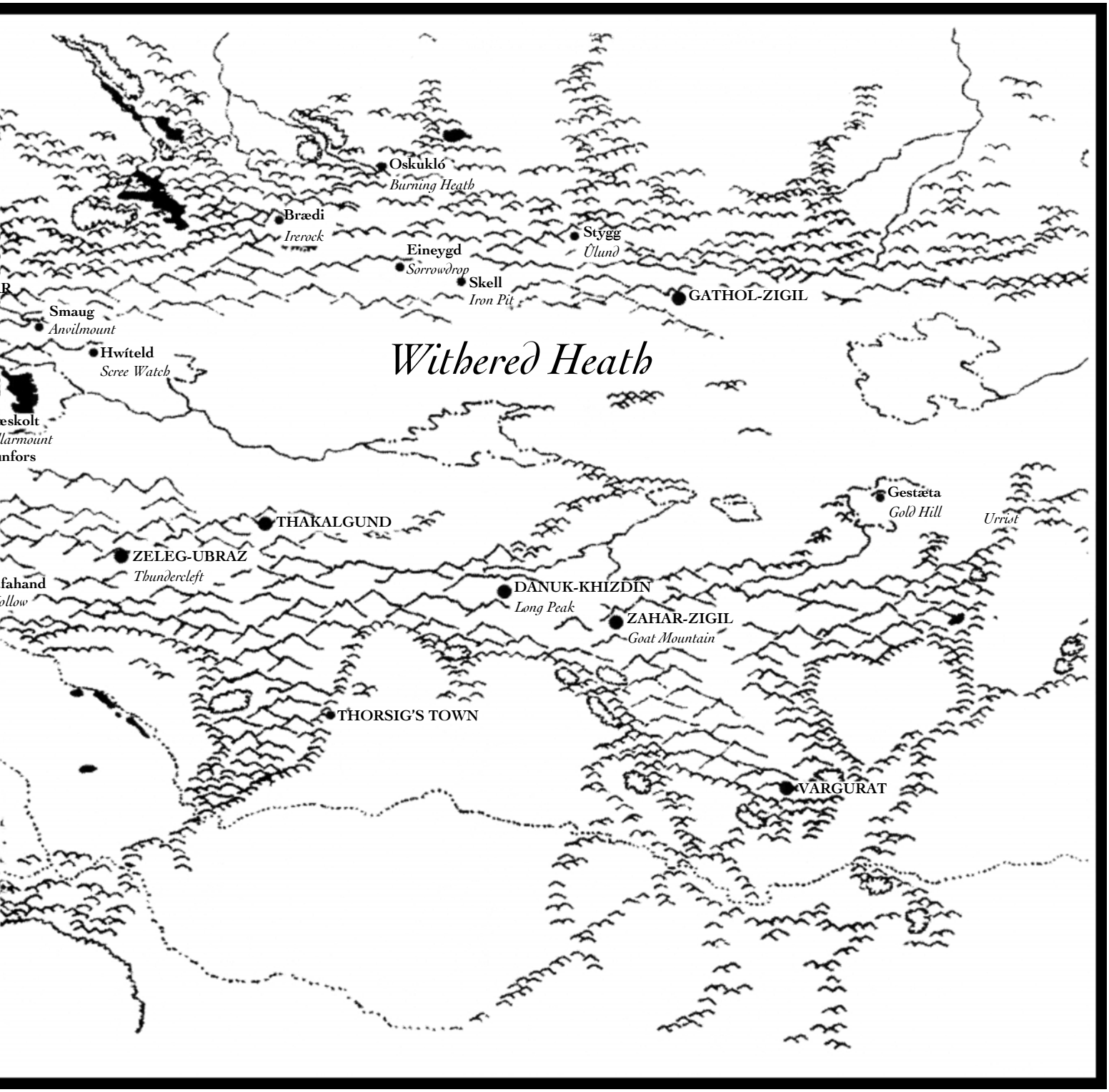


INDEX OF NAME TRANSFORMATIONS

Agburanar > Stygg	Klyaxar > Oskukló
Ando-anca > Skell	Leucaruth > Brædi
Angurth > Einhyrnd	Lomaw > Snæskolt
Bairanax > Bernafahand	Long Peak > Danuk-khizdín
Celeb-ost > Gathol-zigil	Nimanaur > Hwíteld
Culgor > Hest	Norr-dum > Thakalgund
Daelomin > Náttskuggi	Silver Pit > Zahar-zigil
Dynca > Eineygd	Silverplunge > Makalkukhizdín
Haurnfile > Hraunfors	Throkmaw > Daudaskolt
Hyarleuca > Rispa	Thundercleft > Zeleg-ubraz
Itangast > Gestæta	Uruial > Draug

Bold: Dwarf Hold, Orc Camp or Dragon Name
Italics: Dragon Lair or Mountain Name

nd the Withered Heath



The Knights Of Eärendur

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Upon the death of its last king, Eärendur, the Dúnadan realm of Arnor fragmented into three lesser domains: Arthedain, Cardolan and Rhudaur. Since that time, certain Dúnedain have called without success for the reunification of Arnor. The most resounding failure was that of King Argeleb of Arthedain, who proclaimed his sovereignty over all Arnor in 1349, just prior to renewed war against Rhudaur and Angmar. In that war, Rhudaur fell under the rule of the Shadow, in spite of the few Dúnadan families that had settled there to live in the lands of their ancestors.

Yet not all hope for reunification died with Argeleb. In fact, a strong current in favor of it lives on in Arthedain and Cardolan. This sentiment has taken the form of a secret order: the "Knights of Eärendur," comprising Dúnedain from all backgrounds, diverse profiles and different motivations.

In spite of certain disagreements, all are convinced (from examples too numerous witnessed in the past) that they cannot achieve their goal through diplomacy. On the other hand, given the influence that some members have, they believe a rapid action (notably the removal of representatives of the current royal families) led by the nobility of Cardolan and Arthedain in concert would enable them to force their vying monarchs to abdicate. The nobles would then convene to elect the first king of a reunified Arnor from among the different claimants descended from the direct line of Isildur.

For the traditionalist Dúnedain, these plans might have remained in the realm of utopia had the Order's existence not reached the ears of the Witch-king, who quickly saw the advantage he could draw from such a political situation. If the coup d'etat actually were to take place, the two kingdoms would find themselves in a very vulnerable position vis-à-vis Angmar.

Whether or not the Order's plan succeeds, it could only be launched by a surprise attack; at first, it would encounter only weak opposition. To ensure that the Order achieves its goals, the Witch-king has infiltrated its ranks with individuals over whom he has control. One such traitor is Caldil, secretary to Mardil, seneschal of the Order.

Caldil is a handsome, cultivated young man who makes a show of politeness, a facade which hides the ambition of a ravenous wolf. He is descended from the line of Elendil (either Cardolan or Arthedain) and aims one day to claim the rule of Arnor, though he possesses none of the requisite qualities. In fact, Caldil wants chaos to reign supreme in Arnor, so that he can intervene and, by revealing his true ancestry, have himself crowned at Annúminas (as a vassal of Angmar), and then embark on a war of conquest against Gondor. Few of the Knights of Eärendur—the seneschal included — would tolerate such a pretender, though as yet none but Caldil's own followers are aware of his intentions.

To initiate this scheme, and being informed of the Witch-king's own designs for war, Caldil has chosen to act. The year is 1409—the year of the great Second Northern War between Angmar and the defenders of Arthedain and Cardolan, the year when the Tower of Amon Sûl must fall.

Just prior to the war's outbreak, Caldil persuaded Mardil to command his knights to abduct the royal heirs —Prince Aranarth of Arthedain (younger brother to Araphor) and Princess Núriel of Cardolan—and to hold them hostage as surety for the kings' compliance with the Order's demands. It is Caldil's hope that the onset of the Witch-king's invasion will make it impossible for the kings to comply, thus affording Caldil an opportunity to take matters into his own hands.

SYNOPSIS

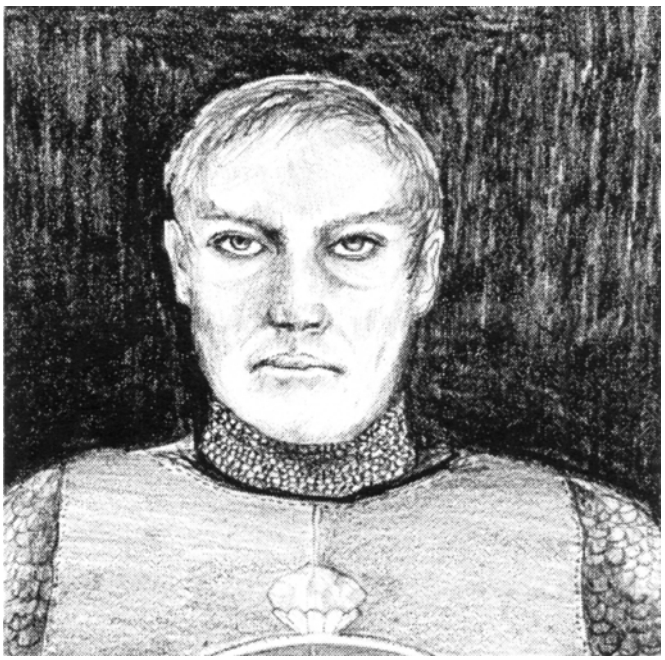
This scenario is designed for Arthadanian or Cardolanian loyalists ready to commit themselves to rescuing the royal heirs from the clutches of the Order, and especially to thwarting Caldil's scheme. In order to find out about the Knights of Eärendur and their demands, the PCs must be in the right place at the right time. The first part of this adventure provides the necessary circumstances.

The PCs begin as defenders of the doomed tower of Amon Sûl, besieged by the forces of Angmar. In the course of the desperate battle (and in spite of serious skirmishes), the PCs manage, in company with some sentries, to spirit away the *palantír* of Amon Sûl (the master seeing-stone of Arthedain) to the safely of Fornost.

On their way, the PCs encounter a courier bearing the written abdication demands of the Order. However, since the PCs know that King Arveleg of Arthedain has fallen in battle, and because the courier is too grievously wounded to bear the missives himself, it falls to the PCs to deliver the letters to the King's Council at Fornost in person.

Since the PCs have brought the *palantír* to Fornost, the royal seers can now make use of its scrying powers to aid the Council

CALDIL



in reaching a decision regarding the knights' demands. With their king dead and the royal heirs of both realms in jeopardy, the Council decides, under the circumstances, to accede to the Order's wishes, entrusting the PCs (whose heroism and loyalty has been proven by their rescue of the *palantír)* with the task of delivering their reply to the knights and safely recovering Aranarth and Nrriel.

The PCs must now traverse the war-torn landscape in order to obtain the assent of King Osthir of Cardolan (or, if he be fallen in battle as well, that of his regent, Nimhir, at Tharbad). Then they must reach the appointed meeting place with the knights before the time limit appended to their demands expires. Unfortunately, all of the PCs' efforts will be opposed by Caldil's minions and allies, since he does not want news of Arthedain s and Cardolan's compliance to reach the ears of Mardil, his superior.

THE SECOND NORTHERN WAR

"A great host came out of Angmar in 1409, and crossing the river entered Cardolan and surrounded Weathertop. The Dúnedain were defeated and Arveleg was slain. The Tower of Amon Sûl was burned and razed; but the *palantír* was saved and carried back in retreat to Fornost, Rhudaur was occupied by evil .Men subject to Angmar, and the Dúnedain that remained there were slain or fled west. Cardolan was ravaged."

– LotR III.320-321

The crisis of 1409 demonstrates the Witch-king's ability to take advantage of the faults and weaknesses of the Dúnedain. Faced with the armies of Carn Dûm and Mount Gundabad (ca. 10,000 Men and 20,000 Orcs), the Dúnedain of Arthedain and Cardolan fielded an army inferior in number. Cardolan mobilized quickly, but the host was disparate, weak in valor and lacking unity of command, requiring elite troops to compensate for its numerical weakness. Moreover, agreement did not always reign, even in the face of a common enemy: while the army of Cardolan maneuvered in the hills towards Amon Sûl, the heavy cavalry of Arthedain, under the command of Prince Araphor, remained in the plain.

This time, the Angmarean offensive came from the east. The fall of Rhudaur opened the entire eastern flank of the defenders. Amon Sûl presently came within range of the enemy, being reachable by the Great Road traversing the lands from east to west. Only the network of fortified towers held by Northman mercenaries in the Angle of Rhudaur stood in the way.

Unfortunately, these towers have fallen, one after another, to the enemy, and a host of Orcs and Hillmen has besieged Amon Sûl. Now, at the beginning of May, and after several weeks of siege, Amon Sûl is at the point of falling. King Arveleg of Arthedain has already perished beneath the tower's walls. The outer defenses have fallen, and only the tower itself still resists the assaults of the enemy. Moreover, the joint armies of Cardolan and Arthedain have been constrained under weight of enemy numbers to withdraw to the Barrow-downs. Only 30 or so defenders remain, among whom are the PCs...

A HASTY DEPARTURE

Night begins to fall; the defenders barely manage to repel a deadly assault in which a good part of the PCs' companions perish. The gates of the fortress are broken, so that in the next assault the assailants will have scarcely any trouble penetrating the tower, despite its various traps and defenders, and looting whatever may be there (notably the *palantír*, which the Witch-king desires above all).

As the defenders survey the enemy's most recent handiwork, Arthonion, captain of the tower, gathers the PCs and principal garrison officers into a guardroom on its middle level. Also present is Curunil, the Lord High Seer of Arthedain. All have a dark look.

Though they believe the battle to be lost, surrender is unacceptable. If one of the PCs should suggest this option, the captain would slap that person in the face, making clear the indignity of such a suggestion. However, something must be done, and the captain is ready to listen to the PCs.

If they have nothing to suggest, the captain will ask one of the PCs—the one in whom he has the most confidence—to assume command of the contingent which must escape with the *palantír* (by a secret passage known only to the captain and the seer), while he and a part of his men endeavor to slow down the Orcs.

At this moment, a guard on watch sounds the alarm: the Orcs, no doubt galvanized, launch themselves to the assault of the tower. They number around a hundred and take the courtyard from the last defenders, who have fought all day without resting.

The confrontation will undoubtedly be rough, there will be countless losses, but in the end, a small contingent succeeds in leaving the tower with the *palantír*. (Several men are needed to lift the stone.) The PCs descend a circular stair, running 40 yards beneath the tower into a circular chamber. Another exit permitting departure from the place emerges in a small cave, 2 miles to the northwest. Once the secret passage has been traversed, the refugees will be temporarily safe, but time is short for those fighting back the enemy forces.

GM Note: *Play upon the fact that the PCs are fatigued, but impress upon them the need to push themselves, do that the majority may escape by the secret exit. Try to complicate the PCs' task by a confrontation with the Orcs (but avoid dragging out the combat), or by securing some of the soldiers with difficulty, or by some women in danger of Orkish violence.*

OPTIONAL PLOT ELEMENTS

- It is possible to make the PCs experience the tension of the siege by adding offensives from the Hillmen by day, and from the Orcs by night. However, in the middle of the night there is always a moment of calm for the defenders (between 2 and 5 AM) —the Orcs need to rest too!
- Loss of the outer defenses has been so brutal in the course of the last days that certain important documents could not be saved in time. Some courageous volunteers must recover these documents (hidden under a bed), which concern the line of Elendil and the use of the *palantír*. It is necessary to cross the enemy lines (leaving by the small gate hidden at #28) to reach (and especially to return from) the Tower of the Prince (#15), which is currently defended by treacherous knights of Rhudaur. (Numbered locations are keyed to ICE's *Weathertop* module.)
- And what if not all the defenders of the tower prove loyal? There might be an Angmarean spy among them waiting to exploit a moment of inattention to open wide the tower gates or discretely kill certain defenders. The task of the PCs would be to unmask him before it is too late.

GETTING TO FORNOST

Normally, the PCs should follow the road along the Weather Hills to reach Fornost. But it is possible that they might choose

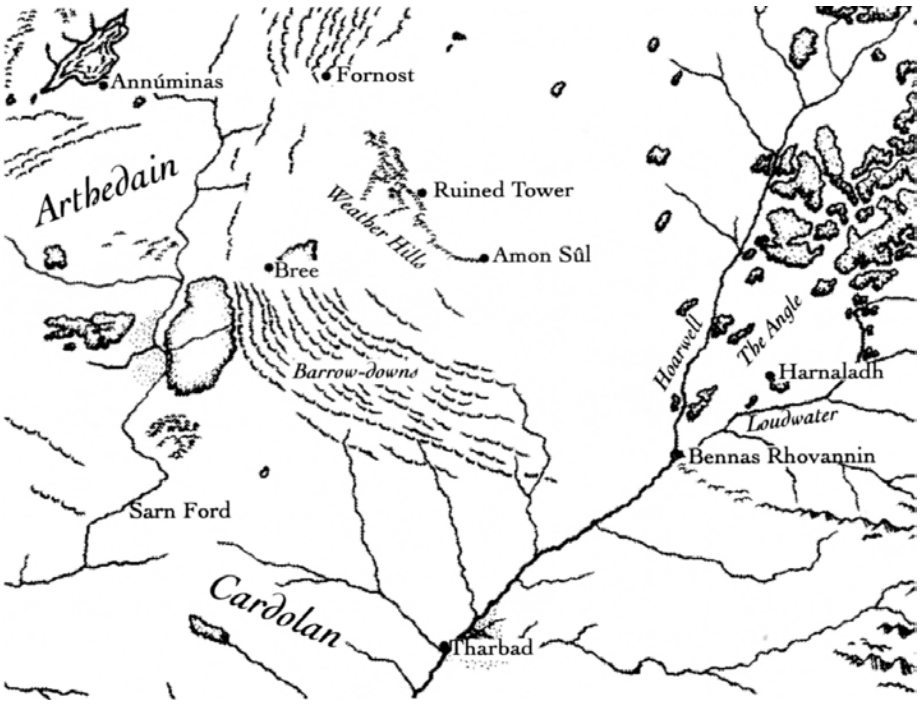
another route (e.g., to get back to Annúminas or even distant Tharbad). Fornost is about 130 miles from Amon Sûl, 80 of which are rough terrain. Unless they find horses (which is highly improbable), the journey takes 7 days, and a little less by forced march (5-6 days). These hills are all the more difficult to cross because no tree grows on their flanks or their crests.

But the captain of the Witch-king's army, Rogrog, an Olog feared even throughout Angmar, is no dupe: he is convinced that a small contingent has escaped to deliver the *palantír* to safety, probably towards Fornost. The PCs may therefore encounter Orcs patrolling the area, seeking to destroy all those who may be there and, incidentally, to seize anyone living who might be able to provide information (naturally, under constraint) on Dúnadan activity in the area. Equally, the PCs might have some inconvenient encounters by night, notably in caves (e.g., a bear the PCs disturb from hibernation).

At morning, as they come into view of it over a mountainous height of the Weather Hills, the PCs hear sounds of combat from a small, ruined tower. While drawing near, they see a score of Orcs assaulting it. If the PCs want to intervene, the others members of the company remain behind in a small cave to protect the *palantír* (especially to make sure the Orcs do not see it).

The combat should unfold without too many problems. The remnants of the tower contain nothing special. The defenders, on the other hand, are of very great interest a group of 6 Dúnedain (3 of whom are wounded). One of them, a man in the grip of age who grows a handsome mustache and is clad in grey ranger's garb, presents himself as Curuvir, special envoy from Fornost to his majesty King Arveleg. He was the bearer of two secret missives destined for King Osthir of Cardolan and King Arveleg of Arthedain. He had been intent on traversing the enemy ranks — a very difficult task, but not impossible — to rejoin his king.

Curuvir asks for rumor of the siege of Amon Sûl, and is deeply stricken by news of his lord's death. At that moment, the other members of the company arrive, carrying the *palantír*. The sight of the *palantír* turns Curuvir pale, as he realizes how catastrophic the situation is. In light of Arveleg's death, Curuvir does not know to which heir he must deliver the letter. He therefore needs the aid of the PCs. (His wound, a poisoned dagger stab from a vicious Orc, is very serious.)



Curuvir is completely ignorant of Osthir's whereabouts. (He was hoping to obtain this information at Amon Sûl.) All that he can say is that he received these missives at Fornost from a knight dressed all in black (a knight of Eärendur) bearing a coat of arms whose emblem depicted a single star, the Elendilmir.

GM Note: *PCs who make a successful History roll (+30 for Dúnedain and Elves) will recognize the Elendilmir as the symbol of unified Arnor.*

FORNOST

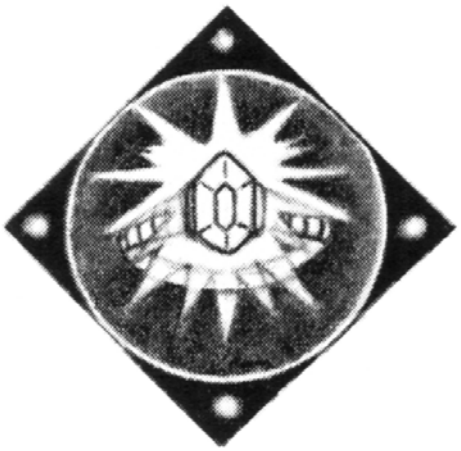
Five horses, more or less capable of bearing the PCs to Fornost, remain at the ruined tower. Whatever the mode of transport envisaged, the PCs arrive without incident.

The two letters, addressed to Arveleg and Osthir respectively, bear the same message:

We, the Knights of Eärendur, demand that King Arveleg of Arthedain and King Osthir of Cardolan abdicate with all urgency in order that a king of Arnor Reunified may be named by the nobles of Arthedain and Cardolan. If our demands are not met within two weeks' time, we shall be forced to execute Princess Níriel of Cardolan and Prince Aranarth of Arthedain. We require evident proofs of these abdications. We await your reply at Bennas Rhovannin, at the crossing of the two rivers.

The Knights of Lord Eärendur of Arnor Reunified

Be warned: If you try to trap our emissaries and they do not return, safe and unharmed, the prisoners will be executed immediately.



Bennas Rhovannin is a fortified settlement at the confluence of the Rivers Hoarwell and Loudwater. The "crossing of the two rivers" refers to the ferry crossing opposite that town. The actual stronghold of the knights (where Níriel and Aranarth are being held) lies a good 60 miles northeast of this place in the Angle of Rhudaur. This secret hideout is Harnaladh, an ancient Dúnadan beacon-tower.

If the PCs have not already suggested it, Curunil consults the *palantír* concerning Osthir and Prince Araphor (Arveleg's heir, also last seen on the battlefield). The seer returns an hour later, face pale and features drawn, and announces that he is very pessimistic about their fate. He has seen a desperate and bloody battle unfold between the opposing forces of the Witch-king and a beaten army (that of Cardolan?). He has

not succeeded in identifying the location of this battle, only that shadows seem to encompass the visions (which indicates great danger). Curunil has also beheld the pillage and systematic massacre of all who live in Cardolan by the Witch-king's creatures.

None among the King's Council at Fornost has ever heard of the Knights of Eärendur (though the association of Eärendur's name with the idea of a reunited kingdom is by no means unfamiliar to them). The motive behind the recent abductions of Aranarth and Níriel now becomes clear: with King Arveleg slain, and the fates of King Osthir and Prince Araphor in doubt, the destiny of the royal house of Arthedain now rests upon young Aranarth. These knights will not be satisfied with fine promises, but demand an officially signed document ratifying the abdication. Unfortunately, the kings who would be able to furnish these documents are either dead or on the point of dying!

In view of the desperate nature of the situation, the PCs should not have too much difficulty obtaining a document from the Council renouncing the claim of Arveleg's house to the kingship (but only if the PCs specifically request it). They are furnished with swift horses to inform the Regent of Tharbad of the Council's decision, but are nevertheless enjoined to do their utmost to personally rescue the royal heirs and render harmless these mysterious knights.

GETTING TO THARBAD

There are at least two courses of action open to the PCs. They may set out for Tharbad without delay, or they might make straight for Bennas Rhovannin. In either case, they may wish to go to the inn where Curuvir met the mysterious knight dressed in black, to gather clues from the customers (innkeeper, soldier, butcher, etc.). Some saw this black knight leaving Fornost a little before the closing of the gates. It was scarcely a day ago that he took the road southwards. The PCs may try to catch up with the mysterious knight in order to interrogate him. At each stage of the journey, they can gather rumor of his passage. ("I got the shivers when the stranger passed by.")

GM Note: *Whether the PCs actually catch up with him is for you to decide.*

Depending on the itinerary chosen by the PCs, the journey may not be safe: they are crossing a countryside ravaged by the Witch-king's hordes, and will inevitably encounter his minions — Ores, Trolls, and surely several wargs—or his spies. There are two main routes for reaching Tharbad from Fornost. The first, riding due south through the Barrow-downs from Bree, is the most direct (ca. 320 miles), but it is also the most dangerous, as it would bring the PCs through the heart of the fighting (on the other hand, this may be desirable, if their goal is to seek out Osthir or Araphor). The second major route — west from Bree into Siragalë, then south to Sarn Ford, and from there southeast along the Redway to Tharbad—ranges much farther afield (ca. 500 miles), but avoids most of the warzone.

GM **Note:** *The date of the meeting at the river crossing should be calculated so that the PCs have just enough time to procure the necessary documents (from the authorities of Fornost, and from Nimhir, Regent of Tharbad), and then to get themselves to Bennas Rhovannin.*

HAUPENROLL

From Fornost, it normally takes a day to reach Bree by horse. During that journey, Haupenroll the Mage, an old man with a salt and pepper beard, clad in coarse grey garments, chooses to make his appearance. He is unarmed, but supports himself with a great gnarled staff. He approaches the PCs, speaking words of peace.

Haupenroll

Haupenroll is a very toady individual, obsequiously polite, who will do his utmost to inspire admiration and fear in the PCs, speaking in phrases like: "My powers are very great" or "Our meeting is not perhaps by chance, I knew it." In reality, he is a swindler whose sole claim to fame is his possession of the spells *Invisibility* and *Sleep* (which he uses excessively). He wants to be accepted by the group so that he may later rob them (taking horses, gold pieces, precious documents which he may be able to resell). He may also amuse himself by sowing discord among the group. In his own way, he may become a redoubtable adversary.

THE PEDDLER

The stay in Bree may be the occasion for the PCs to discover the King's Rest inn, held forth by a progenitor of Barliman Butterbur. In the common room, they may make the acquaintance of several persons; for example, a peddler who would like to go to Tharbad to sell his merchandise, in spite of the present war situation. Despite appearances, however, this peddler could be an Angmarean spy who desires to learn a little more about the PCs so that he can later lay a trap for them in Tharbad.

MORDHRUIN AND FRIENDS

If the PCs choose the longer road, they are met at Sarn Ford by three rather exotic mounted travelers (actually servants of Angmar). They appear friendly (at least in the case of Mordhruin, who presents himself as a calligrapher; the others speak little). Mordhruin says he wants to reach Bree very soon, and regrets that he cannot journey with the PCs, since they are headed the opposite direction. In fact, his

group will secretly follow the PCs at a distance.

- **Mordhruin the Hunchbacked** is of small height due to his illness, which lowers his head to the level of his shoulders. Of Númenórean origin, and in spite of his physical deformity, Mordhruin has a handsome appearance with his even lines and silky hair. At the same time, there is a vague Elvish air which shows through in his glance or certain expressions. He is dressed in large robes and a long, hooded cloak of heavy, warm fabric, predominantly dark, embroidered with birds of prey and stylized geometric motifs in gold or purple thread. He wears a ring of red gold (x3 PP multiplier), the inner face of which bears an inscription in the Black Speech which dedicates the bearer to Darkness. Any PCs who put on the ring will feel themselves attracted by Angmar (a little like when the bearer of One Ring feels a certain mixed attraction and repulsion towards Mordor). Mordhruin rides a beautiful white palfrey and carries a +5 enchanted dagger concealed in his robes. He carries on his person a sum of 75 gp.
- **Calengon** is a small man of dark and tanned skin, slit eyes, flat nose, and expressionless face. He has a shaved head and thin black stubble. He wears a fur cap, a tabard and coarse leather pants (equivalent to soft leather), on his back he carries a long scimitar, a composite bow and a quiver. Laced leather boots reach up to his knees. To protect himself from the cold, he covers his shoulders with a large aurochs skin. He travels on a woolly little horse—very ugly, but quick and enduring.
- **Sköll Brokenskull** is the son of a Half-troll of Angmar and a Mannish slave. He is a colossus of 6'6", with impressive shoulders and broad arms like young trees. He has a shaved skull, except at the top of the head where he has allowed a long, braided black lock to hang down as far as the small of his back. He wears several bronze and copper earrings. His face is square, brutal, devoid of intelligence. He wears blue and black war paint in spirals on his face. He wears imposing plate-mail armor, beaten by the blows and impacts of numerous combats. A massive axe (+10, but twice the weight of a normal axe) hangs at the bow of his saddle. He also carries a mass of weapons and a broadsword at the belt. He rides a huge dapple-grey steed which must weigh upwards of 450 lbs.

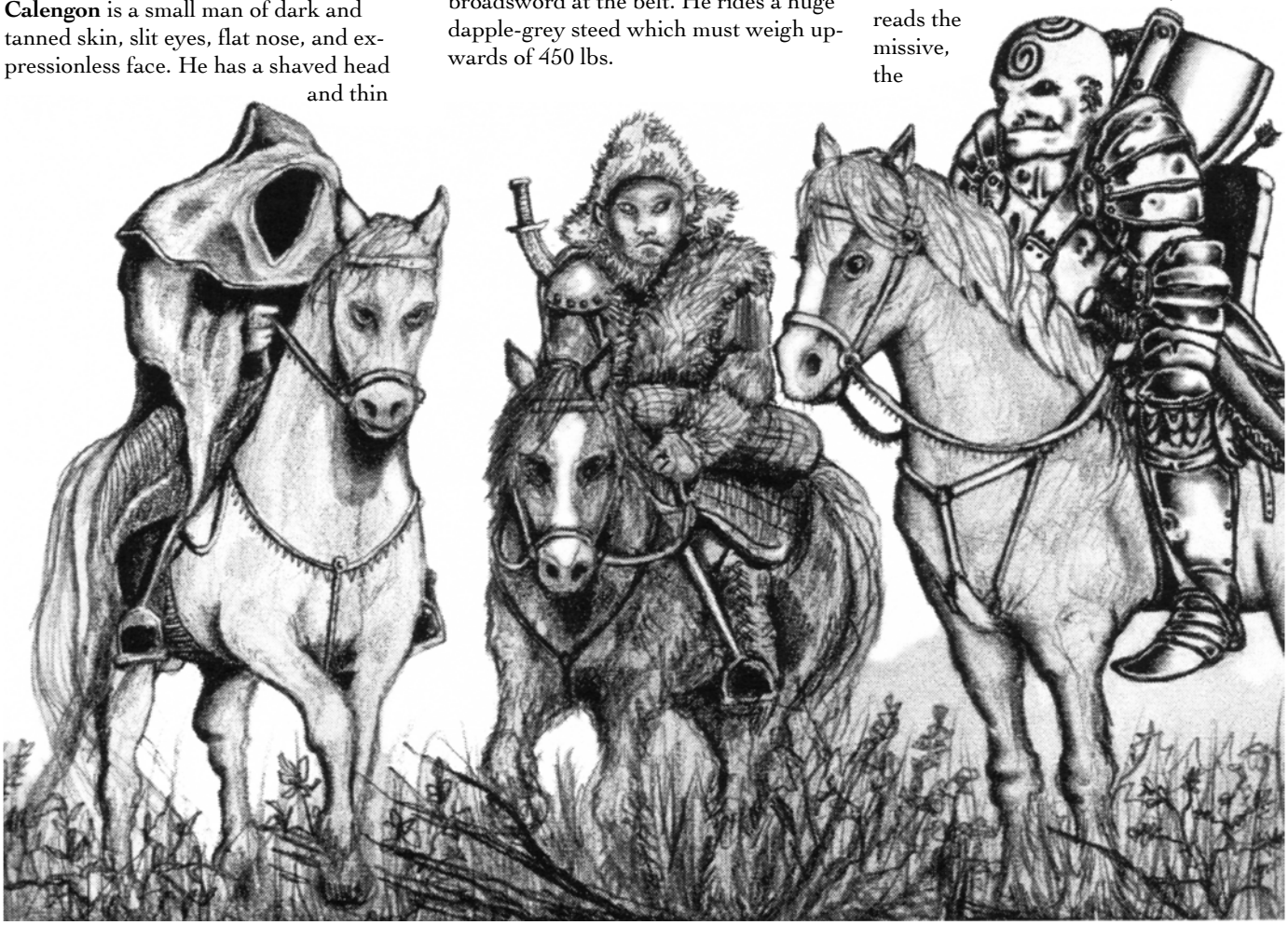
THE DEATH OF OSTHIR

If the PCs choose to navigate the battlefield south of Bree, the intensity of the fighting (which has now moved southward into the Barrow-downs) may end up slowing down their advance considerably — not to mention repeatedly putting them in life-threatening danger. However, if they do decide upon this route, they may learn of (perhaps even witness) the death of Osthir at the sack of Faelond. Araphor is not to be found, but rumor may hint that he still lives.

GM Note: *In order to keep the PCs focused on their primary task, it should be made clear that Araphor is too far away to risk seeking after — Aranarth and Ntriel will die if the PCs fail to reach Bennas Rhovannin on the appointed day.*

THARBAD

If the PCs win through the Barrow-downs to Tharbad, they will be the first to bear tidings of Osthir's death to the city; if, however, they arrive by the longer route, news of the king's fall will have already reached Nimhir. In either case, when he reads the missive, the

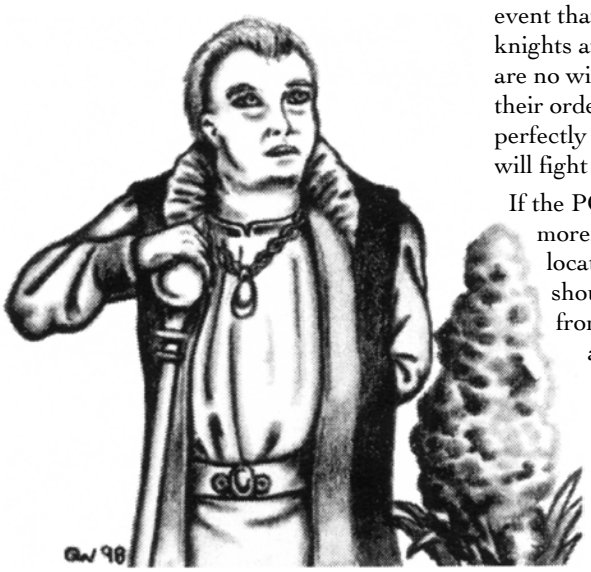


Mordhruin Calengon Sköll

regent quickly complies with the Order's demands in the name of the dead king (though he voices the same reservations as did the Council at Fornost).

The strange black knight may reappear in Tharbad, or it may be his acolytes who meet with the PCs discretely. It is possible that (having spotted them at the King's House) Mordhruin, aided both by the black knight and his acolytes, may conduct a night action against the PCs in order to precipitate the execution of the hostages.

A subtle way of effecting this might be to dispose of the body of a woman made to resemble Princess Níriel in the PCs' lodging. This might take place while the PCs are having dinner in a common room. They hear a great commotion (perhaps from the upper story). Unfortunately, the PCs are not the only ones to react. If they are staying at an inn, the innkeeper and some customers rush forward to discover the lifeless corpse and believe it to be Princess Níriel. The PCs are then surrounded by the Tharbadians, furious at such an act of villainy as



they await the arrival of the city guard. There are many chances for the PCs to be thrown in jail. While being led away under close guard, the last thing they notice is the mocking smile of the "peddler" who accompanied them to Tharbad.

Doubtless the PCs will concoct plans of escape (forcing the bars, bribing guards, etc.), but they have only to wait a few hours for their release. To their surprise, Nimhir appears and opens their cell (the guards having slipped away), excusing them all of the murder charge. Nimhir allows them to depart — with circumspection and under safe escort—from Tharbad, advising them "to make themselves forgotten for a while," at least until the princess is rescued. If necessary, he gives them the official act of abdication.

BENNAS RHOVANNIN

The PCs arrive without difficulty at the ferry crossing of Bennas Rhovannin a few hours ahead of time, but the two knights sent by the Order arrive later than the appointed hour. (Is this really the right day?) They dismount, conducting themselves both haughtily and scornfully, demanding that the PCs throw down their weapons and tie themselves up with cords (except one — whoever seems to be the least dangerous of the group). To enforce compliance, the knights point out the presence of hidden archers (6 in number), who will not hesitate to shoot should the PCs not comply.

If the PCs comply, the knights begin demanding proofs of the kings' abdication. If the PCs hand over the documents, the knights appear satisfied, but then treacherously turn to attack the bound PCs. In the event that the PCs hand over nothing, the knights attack them anyway (since there are no witnesses). These knights take their orders directly from Caldil and are perfectly aware of the latter's plans. They will fight to the death if necessary.

If the PCs defeat their opponents (the more difficult part of which will be to locate and neutralize the archers), it should not be too difficult to extract from any survivors the whole truth, and notably the location where the royal hostages are being held.

HARNALADH

Although it rises from a hilltop, the beacon-tower of Harnaladh is partially hidden by the edge of a forest. Any attempt to approach the tower unmarked by day is normally doomed to failure, as 3 knights of the Order patrol the forest at all times and 2 others keep watch from the parapet (trying to remain unseen). The tower gate is also constantly guarded by 2 knights.

A total of 60 knights man Harnaladh under Mardil's leadership; but a third of these blindly do Caldil's bidding, fighting whomever he might name as their enemy. The imprisonment of Níriel and Aranarth in the basement of the tower is not yet known to the other 40 knights. If they knew what torture Caldil is causing the royal heirs to suffer, they would readily ally themselves with the PCs instead. In short, those who would see Arnor reunited are "idealists," and in this sense, they support Caldil's plans. But they would be doubtless horrified to learn of his true intentions: Caldil, an heir of Elendil's line, seeking to murder his enemies.

There are also a few knights elsewhere (approximately 20) in Tharbad, at Fornost, in the Far North or even in Gondor who act as spies and give valuable information to Caldil and seneschal Mardil. They have many contacts with thieves' and assassins' guilds, and with generous donors who militate for reunification. Many of these (when they visit Harnaladh) receive their orders directly from Caldil, not Mardil.

But Caldil is no fool. If the PCs actually managed to turn his comrades against him and he saw no chance of prevailing, Caldil would seek to harm the PCs as much as possible and then flee—not alone, but with Princess Níriel. Disguising himself as a common civilian, Caldil would feign to Níriel that he was trying to save her life from "a dark master, Caldil," and in order to make this pretense plausible, he would attack his own guards and urge her to make haste to flee with him, telling her that "Caldil will kill her." With about 10 guards, Caldil would withdraw directly north, even to Forodwaith, in order to find a way, in the end, to become King of Arnor.

To facilitate his escape (should that become necessary), Caldil would cause Aranarth to be infected with the poison *karfar* (which kills in 2-12 rounds) in hopes of delaying his pursuers. A few loyal guards would also remain behind to cover Caldil's flight.

CONCLUSION

If they succeed in rescuing the royal heirs, the PCs will have won an important battle against the Witch-king, but much still remains to be done. The Knights of Eärendur, if they have not succeeded in obtaining the reunification of Arnor by force, will perhaps be the cause, quite in spite of themselves, and in spite of the Witch-king's "emissaries" within the Order, of rapprochement between Cardolan and Arthedain (through the mediation of Níriel and Aranarth). Is this what they must learn in order to live together again in harmony? How will the lords of Cardolan react if Prince Aranarth were to become their next sovereign?

GROUND FLOOR

1. Gate. Constantly guarded by 2 knights.

2. Central Hall. A skillfully hidden trapdoor (-25% Perception) allows access underground where the prisoners are locked up.

3. Kitchen. In a corner is found a large chimney equipped with spits. There are also some tables and several pieces of furniture for putting away the kitchen utensils. The cook or one of the guards is always present in the room. The kitchen connects to the storeroom (#4).

4. Storeroom. Here are stored casks ofwine, sacks of grain, barrels of meat and salted fish, etc. 1 guard is always present in the room.

5. Guardroom. Many swords and some axes (some of which are +5) are hung on the wall or stocked in crates. There is at least 1 guard in this room at all times. The door lock is Very Difficult (-20) to pick and is trapped. (A poisoned needle plants itself in the hand of the thief.)

6. Barracks. Common sleeping chamber for 20 members of the Order. Generally, 3-4 knights are staying in the room to rest or play cards.

7. Barracks. Same as #6.

8. Training Hall. For the knights (archery targets, muscular training, etc.).

9. **Stairway.** Leads to the upper level.

FIRST FLOOR

10. Stairway. To the ground floor.

11. **Sitting Room and Library.** The room is richly decorated, and the door is rarely locked. The library is filled with historical and geographical works about Arnor, and more than a few treatises on the principal races of Middle-earth. It holds some veritable treasures.

12. Mardil's Chamber. Mardil has led the Order for some 20 years. He is a very old man who no longer has any of his hair. He does not realize that he is being manipulated by Caldil.

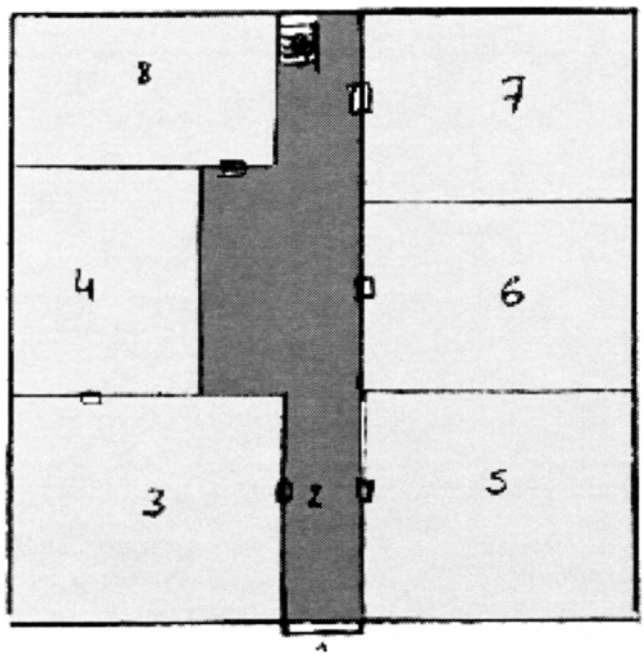
13. Caldil's Chamber. Caldil allows no one except his trusted servants and Mardil to enter his chamber, where the important documents concerning his ancestry and his plans for the war against Arnor led and carried out by the Witch-king are arranged.

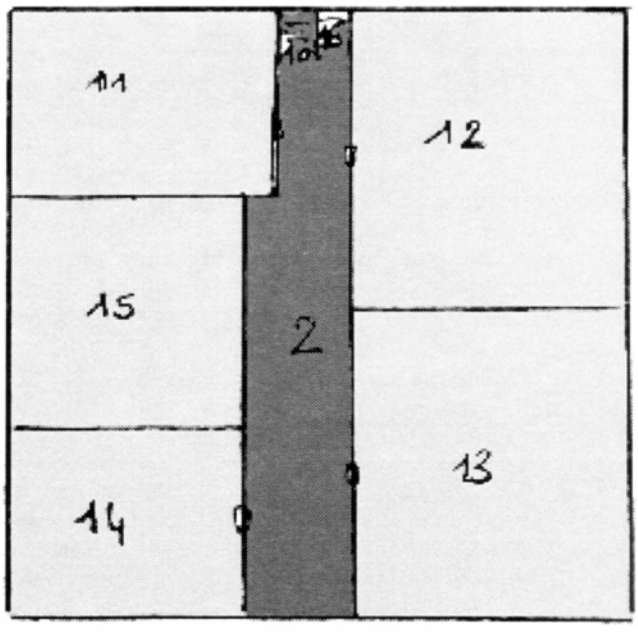
1-4. Barracks. Common sleeping chamber for 20 members of the Order. Generally, 3-4 knights stay in the room to rest or play cards. Several of the knights here are faithful to Caldil.

15. Barracks. Same as #14.

16. Stairway. Which gives access to a trapdoor opening onto the tower's roof. 2 guards watch here, constantly on the alert.

THE BASEMENT





At the GM's discretion, this might be infested by Orcs (on Caldil's orders).

1. Ladder. A trapdoor gives access to #2 (ground floor).

2. Natural Cave. For stocking beer and meats for the garrison. The Orcs (if there are any) are living here (their beds are composed of repugnant filth).

3. Natural Cave. See #2.

4. Corridor.

5. Natural Cave. See #2.

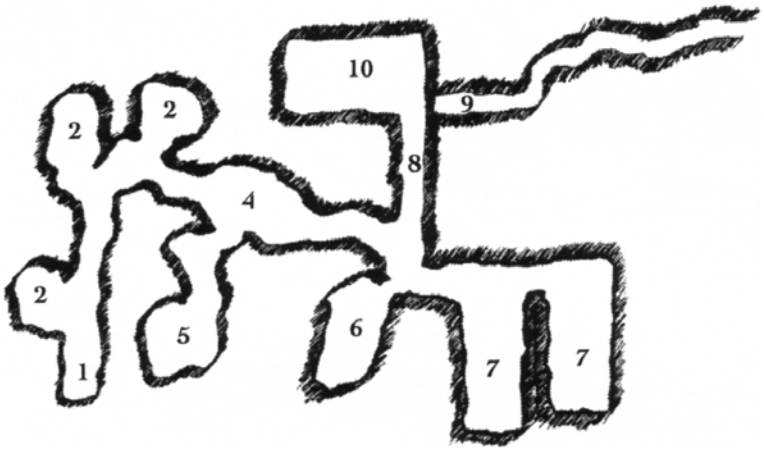
6. Cave. Where various diverse objects are stored.

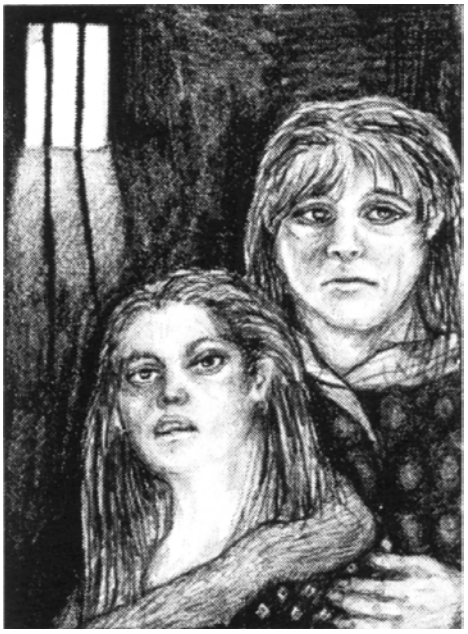
7. Prison. Both Aranarth and Níriel have been tortured, and from their "generous" host they have only the bare necessities for them to survive (but not for too long). 4 guards, wearing the uniform of Cardolan or Arthedain (to increase the prisoners' hatred for their jailers) are present and will fight to the death.

8 Corridor.

9. Secret Passage. Very Hard (-30) to find. If the battle is lost, Caldil may escape by it.

10. Empty Room.





Níriel and Aranarth

SERVANTS OF ANGMAR

Name	Profession	Lvl	HP	MM	Melee OB	Missile OB	DB	PP	Notes
Mordhruin	Mage**	6	44	10 (no)	15 (lh)	—	5†	54	x3PP
Skills: Riding 10, Read Runes 62, Use Magic Item 57, Directional Spells 75, Base Spells 12									
Calengon	Scout	5	49	15 (SL)	30, 80 (1h)	55	20	—	—
Skills: Riding 30, Perception 45									
Sköll	Warrior	6	99	-5 (Pl)	100 (1h)110 (axe) 73 (Fi)	—	40	—	+25 shield
Skills: Riding 36									
Standard Orc	Warrior	3	54	5 (RL)	52 (lh), 36 (axe)	—	35	—	+20 shield
Champion Orc	Warrior	5	90	5 (Ch)	82 (lh)	—	35	—	+20 shield
Uruk-hai	Warrior	8	110	(PI)	105swd	90bow	40	—	—
Warg	NA	5	150		30 (SL) 80(Mbi) -		30	—	—

THE KNIGHTS OF EÄRENDUR

Name	Profession	Lvl	HP	MM	Melee OB	Missile OB	DB	PP	Notes
Infantry (30)	Warrior	3	60	(LL)	69 (1h)	44	40	—	+ 10 sword
Sergeants (10)	Ranger*	5	54	(LL)	85 (1h)	50	35	?	+ 10 sword
Followers (6)	Warrior	8	114	(Ch)	110 (1h)	91	40	—	+ 15 sword
Caldil	Mage*	8	55	(No)	10 (1h)	—	5*	54	x3PP

Skills: Riding 10, Read Runes 73, Use Magic Items 73, Directed Spells 85, Base Spells 16

†+25 w/Shield spell

*2 spell lists (Path Mastery, Moving Ways)

**Spell Lists: Physical Enhancement (3. Sly Ears, 5. Nightvision, 6. Sidevision), Essence Hand (2. Shield, 4. Telekinesis, 5. Deflections), Illusions (4. Invisibility), Spell Law (1. Spell Stone, 2. Cancel Essence, 4. Cancel Channeling), Spirit Mastery (1. 3. 6. Sleep, 2. Charm Kind, 4. Confusion, 5. Suggestion), Ice Law (3. Wall of Cold, 6. Ice Bolt), Light Law (2. Shock Bolt I, 5. Sudden Light)

Rastarin's Log

Bridget Buxton:
Westerly Tower, Umbar

The Tale So Far

Even as the corsair troops of Sangahyandion invest Pelargir, a war of even more apocalyptic proportions is about to unleash itself on the unsuspecting heartlands of Gondor - a war fought not by the living, but by the undead. The Oathbreakers, spirits cursed by Isildur to walk the earth until they are summoned to fulfill their oath to Isildur's prophesied heir, have become divided in their ranks. While most remain loyal to Morthec, King of the Dead, many now follow the voice of Irusan, a protégé of Sauron, Kindred to Morthec in life, Irusan seeks to usurp him in death. If Irusan succeed now in overthrowing Morthec's power, the Dead will not aid Aragorn during the War of the Ring that is to come and Sauron's final victory will be assured.

To defeat Irusan, it is prophesied that the Gwaedhil, twin weapons of ancient enchantment, must be wielded side-by-side in battle. One of these weapons - a spear -Morthec already possesses, but its matching sword is lost. This is where our heroes come in: Rastarin (princess, pirate captain, and brewer), Clennan (Rastarin's first mate), Lytta (Ruadh Spirit-namer), Telcontar (Ranger), and Rassimus (shipwright from Pelargir).

Two hundred years ago, Rastarin's uncle Neithan fled his homeland of Morthond and was never heard of again, and the fated sword went with him to Fuinur's Well in the great desert south of Umbar. Now that her twin brother Kalin is dead, Rastarin and her companions have fallen heir to the quest to recover the sword before Irusan launches his undead crusade. This they are sworn to do in return for Morthec's gift of the Elendilmir, the original object of Kalin's quest for King Tarondor (which, incidentally, Rastarin only joined because it looked like her best option for thwarting Sangahyandion's conquest of Gondor and the consequent triumph of her arch-nemesis, the eeeevil pirate captain Hardon).

In order for our heroes to survive the perils that lie along Neithan's trail, they must first locate and piece together three fragments of an artefact known as the Karajaz, upon which is inscribed a map of the way to Fuinur's Well. With the help of a dubious ally, the Black Númenórean sorcerer Herod, they have managed to obtain two of the fragments. The third, they believe, lies hidden somewhere beneath Eärnil's tower in the Corsair haven of Umbar. Unfortunately, in their attempts to locate it, they have run afoul of several deadly adversaries, and treachery not least...

Chapter Five: The Breaking of the Fellowship

The date is Urui 17th, and Tarassis, Rassimus' turncoat brother, has just made Umbar a very dangerous place for Rastarin and her friends from Gondor. How will they manage to recover the Karajaz, evade the local authorities, and prevent the good (?!! not my choice of adjective for Rastarin's vessel!) ship TCBS from being seized as soon as she sails unsuspecting into port next morning? As usually happens after a few bottles of scrumpy, Rastarin soon comes up with a cunning plan...

To Lord Arkhâd, greetings!

As the traitor Tarassis no doubt informed you, I recently reclaimed my noble title and obtained a letter of marque from the King of Gondor. Some might see this as an indication that Rastarin has finally changed her colours and begun to meddle in politics. But those who know the true Rastarin know better. Bussiness is, and always has been, my singular concern...

Rastarin goes on to explain that her sole purpose in serving King Tarondor has been to destroy Captain Hardon, and that she is willing to aid Sangahyandion in return for the opportunity to eliminate her rival. The leader of the Red Cliff Pirates is the worst sort of lowlife scum on the seas, she claims, and his association with Sangahyandion's noble cause can only damage it.

...But I do not expect these considerations to sway you. Hardon provides you with a fleet, and Rastarin does not. But Rastarin can offer you something far greater: the lost Elendilmir, an artefact of immeasurable value and (need I add) political significance...

Tirieth, mistress of the Drunken Goose tavern, delivers the letter, and returns with a note from Arkhâd requesting her immediate presence at Eärnil's tower. Secretly entrusting the Elendilmir and Karajaz to Clennan, Rastarin departs, unaware that Herod's disgusting monkey has been spying on their conversation.

Ignorant of Rastarin's plotting, the rest of the party now prepare to follow Captain Delbo, their drunken guide, into the crypts beneath Eärnil's tower where the missing piece of the Karajaz supposedly lies. Delbo's 'secret entrance' turns out to be via Umbar's drains, where the adventurers are confronted by Templeton, a gigantic talking rat made especially ferocious by the prolonged frustration of his thespian aspirations. This fearsome enormo-rat luckily turns out to be Delbo's (only) friend, and a trusty guide through the bewildering maze of Umbar's sewers. At long last they reach the catacombs, nauseated by the stench and Templeton's misguided attempts at singing. "They say there's a curse on this place," the rat whispers. "I don't know what it is you want here, but I'd think twice before I stole anything from the dead, if I was you!"

"Oh," says Clennan, looking down at his already bulging pockets. Sure enough, a malevolent presence suddenly begins to take shape in the catacombs, and Lytta and Herod are barely able to hold it at bay long enough for the others to discover the final piece of the Karajaz and escape. They are soon safely back at Mírëadur's castle, although Rastarin has not yet returned.

While her companions travel through the sewers, Rastarin is making her way to the tower by a more direct route. At the gates she is welcomed by the sinister figure of Ambassador Zimrakhil, who leads her before Lord Arkhâd. The Corsair captain greets Rastarin as a kinswoman, and seems quite willing to sacrifice Hardon in return for the Elendilmir, a token that would surely set aside all doubt about the legitimacy of his brother Sangahyandion's conquest of Gondor. Rastarin proposes settling the matter honourably with a ship-to-ship duel between TCBS and Hardon's Black Serpent at Tolfalas, and a date for the contest is set in one week's time. After this, she

promises deliver the Elendilmir to Sangahyandion at Pelargir (with the expectation, naturally, of generous remuneration). As a pledge of Arkhâd's good faith she requests the life of the traitor, Tarassis.

"But I don't ask you to do my dirty work for me," she adds. "After all, the cobble stones can be very sharp in Umbar."

"We too require some evidence of good faith," says Zimrakhil. He draws out a dagger and places it on the table.

"I will not mingle my royal Númenórean blood with yours, half-breed," Rastarin replies scornfully, but Arkhâd takes the dagger and draws it across his own wrist. "You will seal your pact with me, Captain, or we shall have none - and I shall be forced to deal with you as your criminal actions deserve."

Rastarin reluctantly agrees. "Welcome to our cabal," says Arkhâd as he mingles his blood with hers. "Zimrakhil, see to it that Captain Rastarin and her friends are given freedom of the city, and protection from Hardon's men. She shall stay at my castle tonight."

Zimrakhil bows, favouring them with a knowing smile. "My Lord, I am as always... by your command."

Early next morning, Rastarin is woken by one of Arkhâd's frightened servants and informed that two men are waiting downstairs to see her.

"I told Lord Zimrakhil you were indisposed, but he insisted!" he says, and Rastarin notices that his throat and neck bear a painful red imprint from the grip of a gloved hand. Guessing that Zimrakhil has lured Tarassis over in accordance with their bargain, Rastarin writes a quick note to be sent Lytta, summoning her to Arkhâd's castle. With the Spirit-namer's help, Rastarin hopes to discover the truth about the cabal from Tarassis; its goals, she suspects, are far more sinister and far-reaching than simply placing a descendant of Castamir on the throne of Gondor.

The Southron Ambassador's companion indeed proves to be Tarassis, who panics and draws his sword as Rastarin approaches. "You told me we were going to see Arkhâd!" he accuses Zimrakhil.

"All in good time, my boy," Zimrakhil replies. "Now put that thing away. The good Captain Rastarin has now joined our cause, and it is time you two overcame your differences and tried to be friends."

"Of course," agrees Rastarin, and invites her guests to relax over a glass of scrumpy. Tarassis reluctantly sheaths his sword, but he is clearly nervous and seems unsure whether to fight or run. He will not drink from Rastarin's proffered glass, suspecting (rightly, as a matter of fact) that it has been poisoned.

Meanwhile, Rastarin's note is delivered to Lytta at Mírëadur's castle. The brevity of the summons, which Rastarin did not dare to make more explicit, leads Lytta to believe that her friend must be in terrible danger. She is about to wake up the others when suddenly a loud "Aaaargh!" is heard from Clennan's room.

Clennan had been woken a few moments earlier by the feeling of Nubjub's furry fingers reaching down the front of his shirt. Although (as he confessed later to the others) he found the sensation at first rather pleasant, he soon awakened to the fact that it was not one of his girlfriends, but Herod's horrible monkey making off with the Elendilmir! A quick search reveals that the sorcerer is likewise nowhere to be found. The companions are now in a dilemma: pursue Nubjub and recover the Elendilmir, or go to Rastarin, who may be in danger?

"It's a choice between power and the life of a friend," Lytta insists, persuading the others to follow her to Arkhâd's castle as fast as they can.

Rastarin is just beginning to run out of conversation topics with Zimrakhil and Tarassis when suddenly, to her horror, the whole party bursts in on them.

"Rastarin are you all right?" Lytta cries, and then (seeing Zimrakhil), "It's the evil sorcerer! Kill him!"

Smiling at her obvious predicament, Zimrakhil rises and excuses himself, making a swift exit. Lytta looks from Rastarin to Zimrakhil in shocked incomprehension.

"How could you do this - drinking with the enemy?" she gasps.

"Captain, I have to tell you something NOW!" Clennan interrupts.

Rassimus seizes Tarassis by the collar and shakes him. "Why did you betray father? Our business is about selling books, not burying them under the sea!"

"But I only wanted what was best for Pelargir!" Tarassis insists.

"Herod has stolen the Elendilmir!" says Clennan urgently.

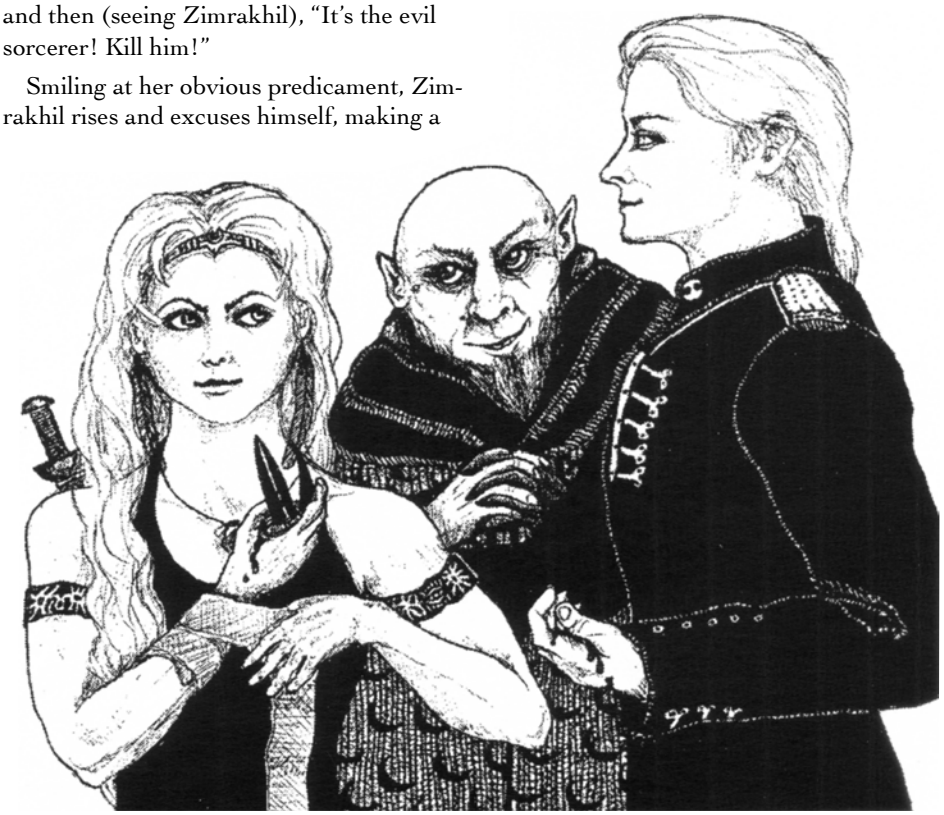
"WHAT?" shouts Rastarin, grabbing him roughly by the front of his shirt.

"Rastarin, would you please tell us what is going on?" asks Lytta, pushing between them. "And how did you get that cut on your wrist?"

"I've just made a deal that'll keep Captain Hardon off our backs forever!" Rastarin replies proudly, but the others suddenly fall silent and regard her with suspicion. Rastarin turns to Tarassis, and tells him he has a choice: either reveal all he knows about the cabal now, or die so that Lytta can wring the answers from his defenceless spirit. But Tarassis only laughs at her. Rastarin draws her cutlass.

"You traitor," he spits. "And you claim to be one of us!"

"Huh?" says Lytta, and Rastarin sees that



everyone is staring at her strangely; even Rassimus is backing away. Tarassis draws his sword.

"Have you joined the cabal?" Lytta asks.

"I – I'm not working for them, I'm just... um...using them," Rastarin begins. "The cobble stones are very sharp in Umbar - and I can explain everything!"

"Well, you had better start explaining now then," answers Lytta coldly.

Finding herself somewhat lost for words, Rastarin decides to buy some time by attacking Tarassis, but Rassimus forces them apart. "I don't know what stupid lies you believed to make you betray your own city, Tarassis," he says, with a dark glance at Rastarin. "But I'm going to take you home, and our father can decide what to do with you." And with that he lets fly a mighty punch that knocks his brother unconscious. Without a backward glance, he leaves Arkhâd's castle with Tarassis over his shoulder, and Lytta and Telcontar following. Rastarin and Clennan are left looking at each other.

"I'm so misunderstood," she sighs.

Meanwhile, in another part of Umbar, Herod and Nubjub find themselves being ushered rather firmly onto Zimrakhil's beautiful pleasure yacht, the Arangwil. Rightly suspecting that Telcontar has inadvertently given away his association with Rastarin, Herod tries to slither out of trouble by hinting to Zimrakhil that he has recently come into the possession of a powerful artefact (currently hidden in a safe place) that may also be for sale. Zimrakhil is not fooled by Herod's evasiveness, and reveals that Rastarin has already joined the cabal and offered him the same item - for free. Herod cannot conceal his shock at this revelation, but he insists that her treachery does not surprise him. As he says, "Rastarin is a born criminal. She would sell her own mother, kill her own brother..."

"I believe she DID kill her own brother," puts in Zimrakhil.

"No matter, her relatives drop like flies. She can't be trusted," Herod continues. He pulls the glove from his hand, revealing a horribly twisted and deformed claw. "Rastarin did this to me," he snarls, "when she sold me some adulterated worm's blood."

"Most unfortunate," Zimrakhil agrees. "But no bargains can be made until you prove to me that the Elendilmir is in fact in your possession." And with that, Herod finds himself unceremoniously ejected from the ship, while Zimrakhil goes off to refresh himself with a quick swim among the sharks - just as Rastarin's unsuspecting crew sail TCBS peacefully back into port.

Meanwhile, Rastarin and Clennan reluctantly decide that honesty is the best policy and request the help of Arkhâd to recover the stolen Elendilmir. They soon find themselves roughly manhandled on board the Arangwil, where Arkhâd and Zimrakhil angrily demand a full explanation. But just at that moment a loud splash is heard. Lytta (who had earlier contrived to sneak aboard Zimrakhil's ship and spy on him) has accidentally fallen out his cabin window while trying to escape on a rope made from the sorcerer's silk pajamas. Zimrakhil has her dragged on deck. The sight of his precious wardrobe floating in Umbar's harbour clearly does not amuse him at all!

Rastarin groans. "Lytta, what on earth are you trying to do?"

"So this spy is your friend?" Zimrakhil asks Rastarin.

"Yes...I mean no," she answers. I mean yes, she's my friend, but..."

The sorcerer cuts her off. "I am tired of playing games, Captain. Prove your loyalty to the cabal by killing this spy!"

"That was never part of our agreement!"

"I am altering our agreement," Zimrakhil says with a smile. "Only pray I do not alter it further."

Rastarin tries various ways of squirming out of the situation, but to no avail. "This deal is getting worse all the time," she complains. Finally she asks for a word with Lytta alone, and insists that the Oathbreaker will have to die if their quest is to succeed.

"We've all had to make sacrifices, Lytta," Rastarin argues. And now it's your turn. Go on, do it for Gondor!" She promises to return Lytta's dead body to King Morthec, so that the spirit-namer can return to aid the quest with even greater power as an undead. But Lytta will have none of it: she thinks they should use the opportunity to kill Zimrakhil. Rastarin disagrees. "I never pick fights with sorcerers. It's as sure a way as any I can think of to get us ALL killed."

"I swear to you, Rastarin," Lytta warns her vehemently, "that if I die by your hand and return to this world, it will not be to help you but to seek my revenge!"

Rastarin gives up and returns to the others. "My friend has made one last request of me that I cannot refuse," she says to Zimrakhil, "she has demanded the right to challenge you to a duel!" But despite Rastarin's taunting and chicken imitations Zimrakhil is unmoved. He warns Rastarin that if she does not prove her loyalty within the next five seconds, he will kill her himself. The count begins, and Rastarin looks from Lytta to Zimrakhil and back again. *It's a choice be-*

tween power, and the life of a friend. And when the count reaches one, she leaps forward with her dagger to attack Lytta.

At that very moment, a great shout is heard as Telcontar runs onto the Arangwil, using his mighty sword to cleave in half the two crew members who try to block his path.

"Kill the intruder," orders Zimrakhil, and guards run to the attack.

"No!" Rastarin cries. Forgetting Lytta, she hurls a bottle of *naurnen* into the midst of the attacking guards, killing several. But her cry of victory turns into a gasp of pain as the Oathbreaker thrusts a poisoned dagger into her back. Clennan leaps over Rastarin to prevent Lytta from delivering a killing blow, while Telcontar bursts through the flames to attack Zimrakhil.

"Die!" he cries, lunging with his sword. But Zimrakhil simply catches the blade in his gloved hand and crushes it between his fingers. "Now YOU shall die!" he says, and seems to concentrate for a moment. They see a terrible expression come over Telcontar's face a second before his head explodes.

"Another one of your friends?" Zimrakhil asks, but Rastarin is temporarily paralysed by the drug on Lytta's blade and cannot reply. At this moment Herod returns to the docks and, seeing smoke rising from the Arangwil, comes over to investigate. At the sight of Telcontar's headless corpse and Rastarin lying lifeless in Clennan's arms, he bursts out laughing.

Arkhâd, who has been watching the entire proceedings in stony silence, turns at last to Herod and Rastarin. "My patience is at end," he says. "Either or both of you must produce the Elendihnir for the cabal's inspection by midnight, or face the consequences."

"Consequences?" asks Herod.

Zimrakhil shrugs. "She dies. You die. Everybody dies."

And so in Umbar the brief fellowship is broken. Herod and Rastarin (now recovered from her paralysis) retire to Mírëadur's castle, where they decide to try to overcome their differences and salvage the situation (and hopefully the Elendilmir too). "I always knew I couldn't trust you, Herod," Rastarin admits. "But I never realised you still held such a grudge against me over that worm's blood."

"No, no, no!" cries Herod, feigning horror at her words. "I don't hate you, Rastarin. We're friends, remember? I was as mortified as you were when I discovered that my mischievous Nubjub had stolen the Elendilmir, and I have ordered him to return it here before midnight. Of course I'll help you in your quest - and in return, is it really so much to ask that you should pledge me your service for just one single, brief year?"

Realising that she has no more cards to play, Rastarin reluctantly swears to serve for a year in Herod's harem when her quest is complete (adding the sensible proviso "unless, of course, you should somehow accidentally die first").

Meanwhile, Lytta and Rassimus attempt to secure the Elendilmir from the clutches of Evil, [as you can see, Lytta wrote this part - ed.] They engage the whiskery alliance of Templeton, Rat Extraordinaire, and waylay Nubjub as the monkey retrieves the Elendilmir from the sewers that night. Nubjub is wounded by Rassimus but manages to escape back to Mírëadur's castle, where the Elendilmir is duly handed over to Arkhâd at midnight.

"To think that Elendil wore this thing," he says reverently, admiring the gem's perfect colour. Herod and Zimrakhil make plans for a sorcerous ritual to discover the nature of the Elendilmir's power the following night, and at Zimrakhil's insistence they also swear a blood oath not to betray each other. Rastarin, meanwhile, sends Clennan back to TCBS to begin preparations for her duel with the Black Serpent.

"Oh, and if Lytta or Rassimus try to board my ship, kill them," she adds.

"That's a harsh order. Captain," Clennan protests.

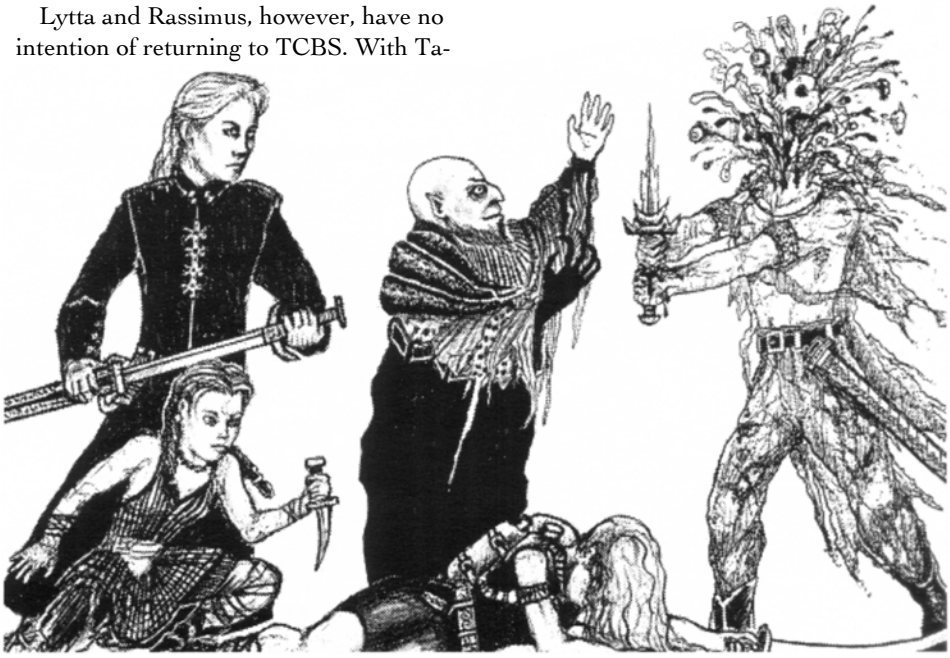
"That's an ORDER, Clennan."

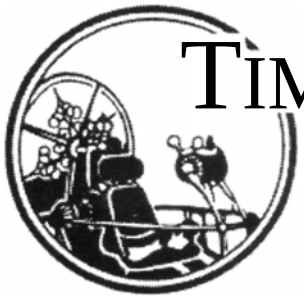
Lytta and Rassimus, however, have no intention of returning to TCBS. With Tarassis in tow they take ship with Delbo for Pelargir, planning to tell the Steward Daeron of all that has occurred. They ponder the irony that it was the famous turncoat of the Kin-strife, Daeron, who turned out to be the loyal patriot, whereas Rastarin evidently betrayed them all at the first opportunity.

"Still," says Rassimus thoughtfully. "I'm willing to bet that no matter how this war ends, Daeron will somehow contrive to end up on the winning side."

"I hope the same cannot be said for Rastarin," says Lytta.

Alone once more in Arkhâd's castle, Rastarin looks out from her balcony and watches the lights on Delbo's ship disappearing into the night. Tortured with guilt and remorse for her treachery (feelings that quickly vanish after a few bottles of scrumpy) she soon devises a cunning plan...





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